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SERMONS

ON THE

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Stations of the Cross

THE OUR FATHER, THE HAIL MARY, ETC.

DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF THE EARLY CATHOLIC MISSIONARIES OF THE UNITED STATES

BY THE AUTHOR

Rev. B. J. Raycroft, A. M.

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PREFACE.

In dedicating this volume of sermons to the memory of those heroic missionaries who erected the standard of Catholic Faith in the wilderness of this country, the Author only intimates the admiration which, from boyhood, he has entertained for those great Christian heroes. When, years ago, he read for the first time Bancroft's eloquent tribute to those saintly pioneers of Christianity, he was pleased with the noble eulogy inscribed by this Protestant historian ; and marveled at the fidelity, perseverance, and sacrifice of those illustrious torch-bearers of divine faith. Face to face with the present methods of "benevolent assimilation" and rapid-fire-gun civilization, he now admires more and understands better the sacrifices and achievements of those true teachers of Christ. If it be thought presumptuous of him to offer his second volume of sermons as a memento of their exalted virtues, untold privations, and inestimable merit, he pleads in extentuation of his temerity, that he should not be too much blamed if some of the enthusiasm of boyhood for those renowned soldiers of the cross still remains and impels him to entwine this little for-get-me-not around their sacred memories.

In his first volume of sermons the Author said : "As to the merits and faults of these sermons, the reader is the judge." Here he does not hesitate to repeat the same thought, though a St. Louis critic was severe in his treatment of the preface to the first volume ; and, if

the readers of this volume can speak as kindly of it as they did of the first, the Author will consider himself well rewarded for his labor.

These sermons were written, as the others were, after delivery. Some may differ with the Author as regards this method ; but even those who differ, may agree with him, that it is prudent for anyone to do his work in the way best adapted to himself, though this way may not be profitable or suitable to another. He may also remark, as he did in the first volume, that he wrote these sermons for pastime and self-improvement ; but it should not be inferred from this that he had no other purpose in view. He had time which, if not employed, would have dragged heavily upon him. Moreover, he is not so unmindful of the distinguished merits of others, to imagine he is beyond the sphere of self-improvement. Indeed, if there is anything of worth in these sermons, he owes it largely to others ;—not that he has borrowed much, nor has he plagiarized ; but the erudite example set by some American priests has stimulus enough to induce other Americans to learn and to improve.

With these few observations, the Author sends forth this volume on its unknown journey. He hopes it will make friends, meet with some success, and do much good. If it lighten the burden of some poor mortal, or convert the gloomy forebodings of despair into faith, hope, and charity, he shall rejoice that he has done something to alleviate the " Miseries of Man."

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FIRST STATION.

Jesus is Condemned to Death.

My Dear Brethren : We cannot do anything better, in the way of meditation, during the holy season of Lent than consider the many pious suggestions brought to our minds by the Stations of the Cross. These stations picture the most affecting scenes on that painful journey which Jesus made from the judgment hall to the sepulchre. Many persons read and study the travels made by distinguished explorers ; much time is a lso devoted to perusing the books of ordinary travel. Thoughts are analyzed, observations are weighed, even trifles are well considered ; but what are all these human interests compared to the Christian interest and devotion which should characterize the study of that sacred journey to Calvary ? This journey bespeaks the love which the Son of God possessed for the human race. It tells, morever, of the self-sacrifice, of the suffering, of the beneficence of the Redeemer for poor, frail man. It is at once the most mournful and most notable event in human history,—Jesus, the Son of God, dying for the sins of mankind. You have read of deeds of heroism begotten by love and fidelity ; but where is the heroism, where the love, where the fidelity like unto this of the Saviour of the world ! He leaves His abode of splendor where sorrow and suffering never enter,

assumes human nature, condemns Himself to poverty, insult, and torture, that sin may have a sufficient atonement. He suffers and dies that the human race may live and rejoice.

The first station represents Him condemned to die the cruel death of the Cross. Pontius Pilate, the Roman Governor of Jerusalem, is His judge. The creature sentences his Saviour and his God to die an infamous death! But how came Jesus in his power? What treachery placed Him in the hands of His enemies? Be astonished, O inhabitants of heaven! Be astonished, O inmates of hell! for the traitor was none other than a friend—a friend who had enjoyed the exalted privilege of his Master's presence, who ate at the same table with Him, who partook of His Divine Master in the august Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist; but who valued thirty pieces of silver more than he did his God! Our beneficent Redeemer spared for Himself no ignominy, protected Himself from no treason, allowed Himself to be assaulted by every debasement that He may better prove to us His love! Observe how, meekly He received Judas, the traitor. No reprimand, no look of anger, no expression of contempt; no, not any of these, but the gentlest word, friend—"*friend, is it with a kiss thou betrayest the Son of Man?*"

Here the agony of His passion increases. Jesus is bound and dragged to prison. He was scourged and crowned with thorns, mocked and buffeted. Pilate believed he could save His life. He reflected. Now a thought of success crossed his mind. He would bring forth a criminal—a vicious, wicked man. He would ask the Jews to take their choice; surely they would take Barrabas, and Jesus would be saved. O rage and hatred! why do you combine so madly? why do you call out:

"*Release Barrabas! Give us Jesus to crucify*"? Innocence was weighed against guilt and guilt was declared more worthy of pardon. "*Crucify Him! Crucify Him!*" cried out the Jews in their madness. But what was the crime which thus maddened the Jews? The crime of doing good. The leaders of the Jews hated Him because He taught a new doctrine. The people loved Him for this doctrine and His benevolence toward them. Pilate declared He was innocent and attempted to free himself of the crime of abusing justice. "*I am innocent,*" he said, "*of the blood of this just man.*"

How many an innocent person has suffered since that declaration of Pontius Pilate! Justice has been bought and sold; and the rights of human creatures trampled upon by tyranny, intrigue, and gold. How well should the jurist dwell upon this great trial which took place in the presence of the Roman governor. How unfaltering and inflexible should be his will in protecting innocence and administering justice. He should engrave upon his reason and judgment the lesson taught by this awful travesty upon justice in the judicial hall of Pontius Pilate. Jesus, Who stood there, condemned to die, will remember the unjust decisions of many a court of law, and will punish with inexorable chastisement the unworthy, polluted judge who permits or instigates the condemnation of innocent persons. Well may every judge learn his judicial duty from this trial. If he is incorruptible, he should rejoice; and in the meanwhile pray that Jesus, the Innocent Victim, may give him strength to wear his ermine spotless. If he is corruptible and corrupting, he is a disgrace to the bench; and if human retribution fail to visit him, an angry God will demand satisfaction. This same trial gives encouragement to innocence condemned to suffer

for crimes of which it is not guilty. These innocent persons turn to God, their Saviour, and beg for solace and sustenance. How many a suffering mortal has drawn inspiration and succor from the life and death of Christ!

Mark again how Divine Wisdom prepared the Apostles for the overawing scenes transpiring from the Garden of Gethsemane to the sepulchre. Jesus foresaw His degradation; He knew the Apostles were human; He therefore fortified them, that they may be strong in faith when he would be apparently overcome by disgrace. In their presence water was changed into wine. They beheld Him feed thousands with a few small loaves and a few fishes. They saw the lame walk; they heard the dumb speak. In bewilderment they gazed upon the Transfiguration, where Jesus, enveloped with the splendor of heaven, shone as the sun. At the Last Supper they received Jesus in the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, so that their faith may not fail on the morrow. Even all these manifestations of divine power were not sufficient to confirm them in their allegiance to their Eternal Master; for behold the infirm, inconstant, frail nature of the Apostles during the doleful events of Holy Thursday night and Good Friday! Judas valued thirty pieces of silver more than he did his Lord and Master; Peter denied Him. All His friends, except a few, vanished before danger. Alone, He is condemned to die. No voice is raised in His defense. The phials of divine wrath are emptied upon the bleeding head and mangled form of Jesus. The sins of the world are upon Him, still no person interferes in His behalf—not even His Eternal Father. He is prepared to die for the human race. He is to be unrivaled in His mercy and love for mankind. No comparison can ever

be instituted between His sacrifice for man and that of any human benefactor. Jesus stands pre-eminent! He exhausts all the manifestations of friendship and surpasses everyone else who has any claims upon the gratitude of man!

We may now inquire who signed that death warrant Was it Pontius Pilate and he only? Alas! no; Adam and Eve signed that warrant; and every human creature who ever lived or will live, except the Blessed Virgin, signed that death warrant. It was signed first in the beautiful Garden of Paradise, and human mortals will continue adding signatures to it until the great Archangel summons the human race to appear before the Innocent Victim of its signatures. Will our cruelty be blotted out before that tremendous day? Will our merciful Redeemer look benignly upon us and say: 'Friend, thou hast often betrayed Me with a kiss, but there was no malice in your betrayal. You were weak; you offended; but you mourned your offences. I forgot in the Sacrament of Penance your transgressions?"

Now, my Christian friends, if we desire to enjoy our Saviour's friendship on that day of judgment, we ought now to appreciate His mercy by meditating piously upon His incomparable agony. How can we best manifest our gratitude for His loving mercy? By expressing our sorrow for our sins and by resolving to avoid them in the future. During this holy season make amends for your cruelty toward Jesus. Let him who is accustomed to use that sacred name in profanity, protest against his past ingratitude. How can a Catholic have the insolence to abuse his Saviour and his God? It is horrible to think of the apparent malice of some Catholics who persist in their heinous insults toward Jesus. When meditating upon His passion, you become

afflicted by the savagery of the Jews ; but what about those Catholics who, without any qualm of conscience, will offend Jesus many times in a day by this insolent base, ignorant habit of swearing ! They are worse than the Jews ; for the Jews knew not that Jesus was the Son of the Most High. Probably a few leaders, judging from prophecies, had some notion of His divinity ; still, the majority were ignorant. They believed Him an intruder who was destroying their ancient customs and doctrines. They had clung to this ancient faith through every calamity ; now they could not endure the Innovator. Had they been convinced that Jesus was the Messiah for Whom they had longed and prayed, they would not have crucified Him. With ecstasy they would have knelt in adoration before Him, the object of so many heartfelt desires ; they would have cherished Him with their love ; they would have honored Him with their treasures ; and their hearts would have incessantly breathed forth their rejoicement in prayer and psalms. But a Catholic believing that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and his own Redeemer, ceases not from morning until night to cry out in a blasphemous manner against his Saviour. Nay, more ; there is a certain well-defined swagger in his profanity. He prides himself on his aptness to insult his Redeemer, though he has been nourished by the body and the blood, the soul and the divinity of that same Redeemer. Cruelty of cruelties ! Mad, insane cruelty toward your Saviour ! " Crucify Him ! Crucify Him ! " you cry out in your madness, and there is a boastfulness in your cry which is disgusting. Such Catholics are more venemous and malicious than the Jews. They are vile, stupid, detestable ingrates !

Break up this degrading habit during this season of

Lent. Show your Redeemer that you are in earnest. Beg Him to pardon you for the treason with which you so often have assaulted Him. You can do this if you are resolved to strive; and if you succeed, you will never regret your efforts. This Lent will then indeed open for you the channels of God's mercy. His sacred blood will flow from His bleeding heart upon you in the Sacrament of Penance. Your insults will be forgiven, and Easter Sunday morning will dawn upon you pure of heart and innocent of soul.

SECOND STATION.

Jesus is Carrying His Cross.

My Dear Brethren : From this station we learn that Jesus has set forth on His painful journey to Calvary. The sentence is pronounced. The cross is constructed. He accepts upon His mangled and bleeding shoulders the instrument of His death and of our redemption. He carries this heavy burden through the streets of Jerusalem—Jerusalem once so favored by His Eternal Father—Jerusalem once so devoted to Almighty God—Jerusalem formerly the glory of the Jewish people and an object of the Psalmist's praise! This Jerusalem is now the first scene in the awful tragedy which takes place on Good Friday. Without a murmur, humbly and patiently, He takes His cross. He does not rise in His majesty and slay His persecutors. He evinces no manifestations of His power to overawe the Jews or demand their submission. He is transfigured ; yet His transfiguration partakes not of the splendor of Mount Tabor, but of the agony of the crown of thorns and the brutality of the scourges. No ; meekly He bears every insult and provocation. The rabble howls, but He is silent. What a sublime lesson He teaches mankind by His meekness! Carrying His cross, He is even more instructive than in His beautiful sermon on the Mount.

These thoughts suggest that we, too, have crosses. Every human being has some cross or another to carry. By not learning from Jesus, many increase the weight of their crosses. Some even make them of thorns to pierce their wounded hearts. Still, whatever its quality is, every one has a cross. These crosses can merit a heavenly reward or they may be only a curse. All depends on their nature and the manner in which they are borne. Crosses are often made out of sins, and those are the heaviest and most galling of all; for they bring no compensation, nor is the grave burden alleviated by strength from heaven. In carrying his cross, every one should look to Jesus for encouragement and sustenance. He knows best how to sympathize, who suffers keenly. Besides, the memorable example which Jesus gives in the carrying of His own Cross, will assist every other cross-bearer if he only learn from the passion of Jesus. Let us consider a few of the crosses which gall the shoulders of frail human nature.

You no doubt have seen a youth in the morning of his days. The smiles of health and innocence were upon His cheek. Every feature indicated the tranquillity of his soul and pointed to a glorious future. His heart was attuned to the finest emotions ; his intellect was gifted with rare ability. Body and soul were moulded, as it were, under the superintendency of some angelic genius. But temptation lured him from his guardian angel only to impose upon him a thorny cross. He courted mistermed pleasure ; he must have it. He must burden himself with the cross of sin, though every friend pleads with him against such rashness. Allurements, blandishments entice him onward, onward, onward ! His cross grows heavier and heavier and heavier, as he advances. Would that he were not so false to

himself! Would that he had the prudence to cast one mental glance upon Jesus leaving Pilate's judgment hall! It may be the means of his conversion. No; on he goes. He or she, as the case may be, carries a mortifying cross to the calvary of remorse. Well might angels weep over the sorrows of such ruin! No reward, no heavenly joy after so much wretched anguish!

Here is another with his cross. Where did he get his? Affliction herself weeps while answering the question: Where did he get it? Alas! it was placed upon his shoulders in the cradle! By whom? Who would be so malignant? His own parents? "No!" the father answers, "no; I would die before I would be guilty of such a horrible crime!" "No!" the mother exclaims in tears, "the last drop of my heart's blood would be gladly exhausted in protecting my babe!" Ah! nevertheless these fond parents have put a chafing cross upon their infant's shoulders. It has inherited passions and defects from them which make a deplorable cross—a cross whose tribulations will often pierce the heart and distract the soul! The infant inherits the craving for intoxicating drink—a cross, a legacy—and the only legacy of a dissipated father! Or it may be a passion for gambling or other defects arising from excesses. The helpless babe is thus on the threshold of life burdened with a lamentable cross, and this by the very parents who seem to love it so much.

Still, the infant grows, and with years acquires physical strength. There is a long struggle—a war! It lasts probably as long as its temporal life. But the child gains new power in every attack. He looks to Jesus for help. He meditates upon the Stations of the Cross, and from these meditations he obtains spiritual allies. He rises above his birth, He triumphs over the constitu-

tional defects imparted by his parents. Nay, more; these defects become germs of virtue which are fertilized by the benedictions of heaven. He carries his cross prayerfully, patiently, manfully, to his calvary; and is crowned by his ever helping Guide, Jesus, with the bays of Christian conquest.

Various, indeed, are the crosses borne by mortals. Some are hewn out of impatience, others out of anger. Jealousy constitutes some; envy, malice, or revenge makes others. Wealth, excessive ambition, fame, or power is the glittering part of many a cross. Yet, the heaviest cross is sin. Every other cross may afford an eternity of happiness for the one afflicted by its burden. Everyone may look to heaven for help to carry his cross, except the sinner. He can get help from the same divine source—not to carry his cross, but to cast it off. Is he not a fool if he do not avail himself of such a beneficent opportunity? Jesus set out from Pilate's judicial hall for him. Jesus died for him. Jesus asks him to come to Himself and He will place a lighter cross upon his weary shoulders: "*My yoke is sweet and My burden light.*" Will he refuse? Will anyone refuse a request so much for his own good and from so great a Friend?

My Christian friends, you have often seen what an insufferable cross sickness produces. Sickness in every form is a heavy cross to bear. You have seen sickness crushing a child under its unrelenting load. You have seen a family deprived of its support by the sickness of the parent. You have seen the widow moaning over her dying son in whom she had centred every hope. He was to be the staff of her old age, upon which she could lean in security. Upon him she depended for nourishment of body and soul. He is fainting away

under his burden and the mother is disconsolate. This is extremely sad. Son and mother have their crosses ; yet God will reward the just son and will not forget the grief-ladened mother ; for, "*Many are the afflictions of the just, but out of them all will the Lord deliver them.*" (Ps. xxxiii.—20.)

Christian patience and Christian fortitude are the panacea for those heavily burdened with crosses. Wailings and lamentations, despair and insolently attacking the providence of God, diminish not the weight of a cross, but make it more chafing and more intolerable. Patience robs the cross of its harassing, corrosive pain, while fortitude draws support from the fountains of Christ's wounds. Patience destroys the nails and the lance of despair, while fortitude centred in the Sacred Heart of Jesus will give strength to the cross-bearer to reach his calvary in triumph. Patience prevents the sufferer from being crucified, while fortitude displays his true Christian heroism.

You should not, therefore, consider that all crosses are unprofitable ; nor are they always the sign of God's wrath ; for, "*Many are the afflictions of the just, but out of them all will the Lord deliver them.*" Even in temporal affairs crosses are often useful. They are efficacious in teaching us what we are, while they mellow our hearts for the woes of others. When God imposes a cross upon a just person, he may be assured that it is a blessing to him. It may be painful at times, but the pain purifies, enriches, and sanctifies the sufferer. Heaven requires purity of soul, and the cross purifies. Jesus says : "*He that taketh not up his cross and followeth Me is not worthy of Me.*" (Math. x. -38.) Let us then carry our crosses, ever obeying the will of our divine Redeemer. He would not counsel us to undertake some-

thing prejudicial to our best interests. Still we must be prudent. We should not take upon our shoulders any cross offensive to Almighty God or destructive toourselves.

Many indeed are the ills of life, but we should not multiply them. They come in various forms. The rich think the poor have no crosses ; and the poor think the rich have diamond studded crosses and velvet covered paths to trod on the way to their calvary. This is a mistake. To be sure the cross is light for many a one ; but wealth or poverty has not much to do with lessening the burden. The heavy cross of one person would be light for another, and another's cross would crush a weaker nature. The old maxim that, " God gives a back for the burden," has much truth in it. Confidence in God imparts strength. Resolution is born of hope. Christian victory is the reward of faith, hope, and confidence. And though the cross ofttimes presses heavily, painfully, mortifyingly, let us carry it patiently ; and when we reach our calvary with our cross, may angels stoop to lift it off our mangled shoulders.

THIRD STATION.

Jesus Falls the First Time under His Cross.

My Dear Brethren: At this station you behold the mournful sight of the Son of God falling under the crushing weight of His cross. He is faint; His human strength is exhausted; He succumbs to excessive weakness. He has withstood the torments of the crown of thorns; He bore up during the savage scourging; with equanimity He listened to the sentence of death,—but now faintness breaks in upon Him. Every fiber of His sacred body trembles, His tongue is parched, His eyes are blurred, His head reels, and staggering, He falls to the ground. Where is the Catholic who would now rush upon Him and deal Him blow after blow? Where is the Catholic who would now crush Him deeper to the earth? Where is the Catholic who would now say to Him: "It serves you right; you deserve more"? A repulsive thought, you may be inclined to say. Yet, He could turn upon you and declare: "You have done all these things to Me. You have been more cruel than the Jews." You might answer: "O God! we never committed these abominations against you! Where were you crushed by the Cross and we struck you? Where were you insulted or cruelly treated and we said it serves you right?" His reply is: "*Whenever you did such things to any of My creatures, you did them to Me.*

I have shown you what mercy is, but you have little mercy for My creatures. I have taught you charity, but you have heaped crosses upon others. Besides, you have disrespected My memory and abused My graces." Such could be the censures of our Divine Redeemer upon many and many a Catholic.

On last Wednesday we considered the crosses which we make for ourselves or which we inherit from others. Permit me this evening to direct your attention to some other manufacturers of crosses. Adam and Eve were the first to place a cross upon human shoulders. The harmony which God had created was broken by their transgressions. Peace was exiled from the face of the earth. Ere long Cain stained his soul with the blood of his innocent brother. Again, God called upon His subject to answer for his crime. First, He demanded from Adam and Eve reparation for their sin; now He brands their child Cain as a criminal: "*What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth to Me from the earth.*" (Gen. iv.—10.) Envy drove Cain to murder his brother, and by his crime he imposed an awful cross upon his own shoulders—the curse of Almighty God: "*Now, therefore, cursed shalt thou be upon the earth, which hath opened her mouth and received the blood of thy brother at thy hand.*" (Gen. iv.—11.) Since that bloody struggle between the sons of Adam and Eve, how many a crime has been perpetrated and how many a grievous cross has been consequently borne! Then lawlessness was introduced, and since that eventful period the reign of might has ofttimes ruled with impunity. The powerful have destroyed the weak and the wealthy have been deaf to the cry of the poor. Crimes have been committed in the name of civilization, liberty, justice, and humanity. Disorder flourishes in the heart, in the

intellect, and in society. Jesus came to restore concord, to impart peace, to alleviate suffering. Harmony was first disturbed by the rashness of our first parents; but now we frustrate the will of our Divine Saviour by not co-operating in the work of Christian tranquillity. Jesus falls under His Cross, but Christians are slow to profit thereby.

In our time you note the contention going on between Capital and Labor. Capital endeavors to oppress Labor, and Labor in turn attacks Capital. Corporations care not whether the toiler and his family starve; nor has the toiler much love for his despotic master. Capital heeds not the cry and moan of Labor; and Labor, goaded to desperation, would strike at Capital as it would strike at tyranny. Would that both were to pause before the Third Station of the Cross! They would behold the love of their Saviour for all mankind, and may learn to love each other better. Bleeding and exhausted, He pleads for humanity. The blood trickling down from His thorn-pierced brow, tells Capital of the priceless value of a human being; to beware attempting the debasement of human kind; to lift up and encourage Labor. Ah, that Capital and Labor were melted into submission by the teaching of this station! Then Capital would not impose an agonizing cross upon the shoulders of Labor, nor would Labor be engaged in hewing a cross for Capital.

To be less general in our remarks, let us come to some particular cases. You have seen a poor man, but an honest man, a prudent man, an industrious man, advance to prosperity. His industry earned a reward. He prospered, acquired some wealth, became influential to some degree. His influence, however, was directed by honesty and intelligence. But no sooner has

he attained to moderate means than many of his friends and acquaintances begin to burden him with the galling cross of envy. They will say : "We knew him when he was as poor as any of us. His feet protruded through his worn-out shoes. His trousers were patched and it went hard with him to get enough to eat." Thus they make his cross, for he hears of their embittering remarks and crude sarcasm. He is tortured by the cross they press upon him. He is undeserving of this cruelty, for his prosperity is neither giddy nor heartless. But they would rather see him remain in abject poverty all the days of his life, his children hungry and in rags, than to see him succeed. What fiendish spirit is this that would crown a man's heart with thorns simply because he is prosperous ! Does Jesus, as He lies prostrated under the cross, teach such rancor and such envy ? Does not His prostrated form proclaim the true nobilty of human nature and exhort man to lift himself up by honest means?

It happens sometimes that a certain man is more devout than others. He never fails to hear Mass on Sunday. He is in church a quarter of an hour or half an hour before Mass time, preparing his soul by pious meditation for the adorable sacrifice. He receives holy communion more frequently than many others. He is, in a word, a good man. But mark the criticism. "Ah! we knew him once when he didn't bother the church or the altar. Often did we see him lying drunk in the gutter. He was a disgraceful sight ; and to hear him swear, it was horrible ! His mouth was ever full of profanity. But see him now. He sets himself up as a model for us all. He talks of temperance with the loquacity of an old woman. He assumes a very grave demeanor. Sure St. Peter could not appear more pious." Alas ! these

miserable critics are festering this poor, honest man's shoulder with the cross of jeers and taunts and mimicry. Their taunts and jibes are thorns in his cross. They would prefer to see him forever a drunkard, wallowing in a ditch, to see his family wretched and starving, than to see him lift himself up and be a man. They prefer to see him degraded by drunkenness, debased by profanity, disowned by society, than to see him a sober, industrious, devout Catholic! Rather be the image of God in his soul disfigured by sin, than be respected for sobriety, intelligence, and grace! Pause, villifier, a moment before this station! Behold your Saviour crushed by the cross, that the drunkard and the sinner may rise. He fell to dignify, exalt, and enrich humanity. Will you dare impeach His mercy and His love? Beware! Think not that you are fashioned by some superior power to fasten crosses upon the aching shoulders of all who are better than yourself.

Here is another poor mortal. He or she is known as a sinner—an unfortunate person who has abandoned the path of virtue for the ways of sin. His or her lot is a sad one; indeed, the saddest which can be conceived; for after all there is no cross so cruel, so piercing, so destroying as that of sin. The slanderer is also busy in this case. Her steel-plated heart and vituperative tongue know no pity. The truth is bad enough; but, bad as it is, the slanderer makes it worse. She will gab and talk, and talk and gab. Some satanical impetus gives zeal to her vicious thoughts and vim to her energetic mouth. What a painful cross she makes her victim carry! Are not heart-aches and remorse a sufficient cross? Who can understand or feel the sorrow and shame of many a sinner? How many a sigh and moan echo and re-echo in the breaking, sin-ladened heart, which no one hears

or knows? Yes, the sinner's cross is heavy enough. Allurement and blandishment, youth and beauty, all have banished. The moan of such a heart is like the sigh of a cemetery. Then have pity, slanderer, and look upon your melancholy victim and upon the Third Station of the Cross. Jesus fell there for sinners. The sacred blood oozing from His bruised head and lacerated body pleads for your victim! That sacred heart, weak and fainting, has felt for a Magdalene before. Beware lest your victim arise from her lamentable conditions, and rising higher and higher, draw inspiration and hope from the sacred wounds of Jesus, of which you appear to be ignorant! The way to her calvary is steep and rugged; yet, beware! lest Jesus meet her there and crown her with never fading honors, when your infamous tongue is parched in the regions of perpetual darkness!

My Christian friends, meditate piously upon this station of the cross; compassionate the sufferings of your Lord and your God. Do not make His cross more agonizing by your unkindness to those for whom He died. He was crucified for all; not that one should place a cross of torments upon another, but that all may be saved from the destructiveness of sin. Meditate upon the divine mercy exhibited by this station and be merciful yourselves. Many a holy aspiration is awakened by a contemplation of this sorrowful scene; the aspiration of gratitude to Jesus for His love, the determination to avoid sin, the resolution never to increase the burden of anyone's cross, the prayer that we may be able to assuage the pain of many and lessen the cross upon their wounded shoulders.

FOURTH STATION.

Jesus Meets His Afflicted Mother.

My Dear Brethren: At this station you behold the meeting of the grief-laden mother and her fainting Son. What anguish was there! The mother's face, haggard and pale, meets the disfigured form of her beloved Son. She had tried hard and often to break through the crowd and reach Him, but she was as often repelled by the guards. However, a mother's affection knows no barriers. After repeated attempts she at last succeeds in approaching her tortured Son. It was only for a moment, for the soldiery forced her back. Still this moment is sufficient to wound the hearts of both more keenly. Well did Simeon predict that, "A sword of grief would pierce your heart!" From the betrayal in the Garden to this meeting, every moment was an eternity of agony. A mob around her Divine Son! A holiday of cruelty and blind fury! Did she hear the blows of the scourges? Did she see the blood trickling down the forehead, telling the pain of the temples penetrated by the crown of thorns? Did the horrible words, "*Crucify Him, Crucify Him,*" reach her heart? She suffered all these torments because, if she had not been a witness of them, the separation only intensified her affliction, for the anguish of thought is more terrible than the anguish of vision.

How bewildered she is! Why should they seize her

Divine Son? He had done no wrong. His life was without blemish. His miraculous works astonished the spectators, who trembled while they praised. Only last Sunday He entered Jerusalem amidst the plaudits of the people. Olive branches were strewn on the ground before Him. The populace went wild with praise. Why now have hosannas changed to howls of human fierceness? He violated no law; He provoked no disturbance; He is guilty of no treason. Was she aware on Palm Sunday that ere a week had passed her Divine Son would die on the cross? Did He diminish His anguish by disclosing His passion and death to His mother? Did He unbosom His troubles to her? Probably He did not. From His childhood He knew the future. His sufferings were ever in His thoughts. Why now reveal His secret? Why now burden His mother with sorrow? It would come soon enough. The sword of grief would pierce her heart before the expiration of another week. Better retain His agony within the recesses of His own meek and humble heart.

This fourth station draws all Catholic hearts closer to Jesus and Mary. Who can contemplate that scene without gratitude for Jesus and pity for Mary? Who can love Jesus and disrespect that haggard, bewildered, weeping face of His mother? Note the blood-stained features of Jesus and the intense compassion upon the countenance of His mother; and tell me, can you adore Jesus as your Saviour and your God and revile His Blessed Mother? No, no; you cannot! No Christian can! Who speaks against Mary can be no friend to her Son. He does not forget that look of pity. He remembers the anguish of that face. Yes; He saw the agony of that heart! She is His mother. She nursed Him in childhood. She followed Him to Calvary.

Her heart was crucified at the foot of the cross. When betrayed by Judas, when denied by Peter, when deserted by the Apostles, when led forth to die as a criminal, one ceaseless friend stands by Him. One friend clings to Him. One friend to whom He became dearer, the greater the debasement, and this friend is His mother. Can He disregard that affection? No; from His divine nature, from His justice, He could not belittle the one whose heaven He was. What would non-Catholics say of an ordinary son who would forget such kindness or be ungrateful for such affection? They would say that he is a brute. Let me inquire, has not Jesus, the Son of God, as fine a conception of the duty of a son toward his mother as our dissenting friends have?

This deviation, though rising naturally from the subject of this evening's meditation, nevertheless lead us away from the topic to which we now direct your attention. The fourth station represents the meeting of Jesus and His mother; and among other things, it suggests the thought that many a mother has been afflicted by the sight of her son since that eventful Good Friday. All this affliction did not flow from viciousness; for many a son has brought sorrow to his mother's heart on account of his heroic action. Many a son has bled and died in his country's service. The mother approved his patriotism while her heart wept over the sacrifice. Other noble sons were crushed by tyranny. The mother's soul was convulsed with affliction when she saw her darling boy led forth to execution. His only crime was that he loved his country too well. The tyrant calls him rebel; his offense, treason. The impartial judge calls him a hero; his resistance, patriotism! History is replete with the memories of such heroes, and every hero had an afflicted mother. Would that

the tyrant, the oppressor, and the imperialist gaze on the Fourth Station of the Cross ; and while gazing, meditate upon the rights and value of man !

Such affliction, however, has a balm which soothes the agitated heart. But what balm can a mother's broken heart find in a bad son ? She pleads with him to abandon his vicious associates, but he is deaf to her prayers. He is out late at night. It may be all night. Who can depict the worry and the affliction of her heart ? A quarrel may arise. Rashness is often the offspring of quarrel. He may be injured or may injure another. After a night of debauchery, how many a son is brought home wounded or dead ! How many another is hunted down for his crime ! A prison door closes upon him, while a mother's heart is torn with grief. Will such happen to her son ? She shudders at the apparition. Overwhelmed with sorrow and alone, she raises her eyes to heaven and begs God to protect her wandering boy. What a heartless young man ! Does he know the grief which rends his mother's soul ? Does he think she is hungry and cold, but still praying for him. O miserable, cruel son ! have you no pity ? Can you be ignorant of the fact, that you are your mother's only support ? What joy you could give her, but instead you are pressing down into her heart a crown of thorns ! Bad associates have ruined you. You are rushing to the Niagara Falls of your destruction and driving your mother to the calvary of her crucifixion. Jesus fell under the cross, but you profit not by His merits.

About a month ago I visited the homes of some young men in this parish, and some who were not young, to beg them to come to Mass on Sunday. It is not difficult for some to give promises, nor is it hard for others to make plausible excuses. Since that time a

few of those upon whom I called attend Mass on Sundays. The young men of this congregation, as a class, are not bad ; and to tell the truth, they are regular in their attendance at divine service on Sundays and at the devotions of Lent. Still, there are some who have no desire for anything sacred or refining. They are sordid of heart and unclean of soul. They are uncouth, vulgar, rowdyish, and dissipated, though they flatter themselves that they are the primest and latest development of gentlemanly evolution. They have no regard for the pleading of their mothers. You may go down on your knees to entreat them and to exhort them to rise from the stupor which holds them captive ; but from some fatality or another they act as if you meant their injury. A mother with tearful eyes will beg : "Now, go to church ; you will be the better for it ; you will be lighter of heart. God will give you grace to shake off the bad companions who are bent on your ruin. Surely, it is good to go to church. Your dead father set you the example. He always went to Mass on Sundays and holy-days. Will you not, for his sake, go to church and be a good boy ?" "No ;" he replies, "go to church yourself if you want to ; never mind me. I am old enough to take care of myself. Only pumpkin heads go to church." He listens not to the prayers of his mother. Her tears effect him not. He is determined to bring destruction upon himself, disgrace upon his family, and break his mother's heart.

If the mother is dead ; and if departed mothers still take an interest in the affairs of their children, what must be her grief when she looks upon the earth and sees her son a vagabond, a drunkard, a jail-bird ! Instead of giving edification to others, instead of being true to his mother's memory, he glories in his sinful

excesses. Pause, young man, before this fourth station. If the remembrance of your departed mother's teachings, if the hallowed recollections of other days do not move you to compunction, look upon this picture. Behold your Saviour and His afflicted mother! Why is He faint and pale? Why is she sorrowful? Why has He the cross upon His bleeding shoulders? Why is her heart pierced with a sword of grief? Why does His sacred blood trickle down into His eyes? All this is for you—your soul is priceless. Behold the estimate in which Jesus values your immortal soul! He dies that you may be honest, chaste, and sober; that you may be crowned eternally by the merits of His passion and death. Break then the shackles of sin, show Him you have a heart to prize His mercies, though that heart is sometimes frail.

There are some other young men who have acquired a certain polish, a peculiar affability of speech and manner which conceals the criminality of their souls. "They are living too fast," as you say. They are too lazy to work; or, if they labor, their wages are not sufficient to sustain the gait they have taken. They must have money. The maintenance of their jeweled society demands gold. How are they to secure this necessity? Why, forgery and theft are their servants. "I will forge notes," one says to himself. "It will never be detected. Others were discovered, but they were dullards; they gave themselves dead away. But even if I be caught, what is the difference? An hour of pleasure is worth an age of pain." But he is caught. The gloom of a prison-cell envelops him. The terrible news reaches his mother. She is prostrated with grief. Another young life is blasted and another mother carries her cross!

Thank God there are not many Catholic young men guilty of such crimes. Yet, while we rejoice that they avoid such deception, we cannot close our eyes to their violation of the law of God and man in other matters. Catholic young men are in prison just as well as others, Bad company induced them to indolence. Indolence begot the desire to possess without labor and this desire was their ruination. Behind prison bars they have time to reflect upon the ennobling opportunities they squandered, upon the opprobrium cast upon their families, upon the gray hairs multiplied in their mother's head, and the bent form of a care-tortured father.

Then let me say to the young men of this parish, never allow the scene of the fourth station to be erased from your memory. When tempted to enter the dissolute avenues of life, recall the fourth station. Think of the affliction it will cost the Mother of Jesus ; think of the thorny cross you may impress upon your own mother's heart ; think of the suffering of Jesus, that He died that you may rise higher and higher in the scale of honora bleachievement and Christian perfection until, the battle of life being over, you are made happy for being faithful to the memories of the Fourth Station of the Cross.

FIFTH STATION.

Simon, the Cyrenian, Helps Jesus to Carry His Cross.

My Dear Brethren: You learn at this station of the extreme weakness of your Saviour Jesus Christ. He shows signs of deathly faintness. His enemies are alarmed lest He die on the way, and they be thus deprived of the opportunity to wreak their vengeance upon His crucified form. They see a man good and strong. This man is induced to help Jesus to carry His painful burden on that memorable journey to Calvary. Did Simon willingly accept the task of helping an apparent criminal to bear the instrument of His death? Did he consider this office a disgrace? Did the crowd howl when the soldiers compelled him to assist Jesus? Or did some heavenly messenger of grace touch his heart? Was his soul melted into sympathy at the pitiful sight before him? Was he delighted when asked to help? Ah! it might have been the mother's prayers which were heard. While following her Divine Son to Calvary, what fervency, what sorrow was in her supplications to the Eternal Father for His Son and her Son, too! How she pleaded with Heaven that her Divine Son's suffering might be mitigated! Did she not pray that some one might help Him to carry the huge burden of the cross?

Such a prayer would be natural enough. But how relieved she felt when she saw the Cyrenian bending his shoulders to the load! Did she pray that this Cyrenian

might obtain a happy death? Certainly she did, if he kindly submitted to the task. And undoubtedly, if he did this from compassion, he was never confined in the prison of the damned. That Mary prayed for her Son we have no doubt; and hope that some ray from the throne of God's majesty awakened in Simon's bosom an irresistible sympathy for Jesus. If this is so, how great was the privilege bestowed upon the Cyrenian! How highly honored! How closely allied to the agony and glory of the Redemption! It was a momentous Good Friday for him.

Beyond what has been already observed, did Divine Wisdom have another purpose in view? Was the love of Jesus for the human race greater than any consideration He had for His own weakness? Was Simon's heart touched, were Mary's prayers heard, that man might be taught to sympathize with his fellow man? Surely Jesus was weak and exhausted—this cannot be denied; but His love for mankind was superior to His excessive weakness and complete exhaustion; He wished to teach another grand, impressive lesson to all posterity—a lesson of sympathy, of kindness, and of charity. He wished to teach that man should assist his fellow man in carrying the crosses of life. How replete is this sorrowful journey with the beneficent teachings of Christianity! Jesus teaches at every station. From His incomparable sorrows and weakness, joys have sprung up for innumerable breaking hearts.

You may envy the extraordinary lot of the Cyrenian. You may desire that you had been blessed with such a sacred privilege, but Jesus answers thus the emotions of your hearts: "You can be a Cyrenian. You can assist Me in carrying my oppressive load. You can wipe the sweat and blood from My disfigured face. You can

express the pathos of your hearts for My passion by being kind to one another." Moreover, at this station He wants to teach you of His permanent fidelity to the human race. He declares to you: "Since man helped Me to carry My cross, I shall never refuse to assist any human creature crying to Me for help. There is another covenant between Me and man; and according to the stipulations of this covenant, I say: '*Come to Me all you that labor and are heavily laden, and I shall refresh you.*'" Jesus wishes to be a Cyrenian to every one invoking His aid. He stoops to help the overburdened, to console him, and to assuage his grief. In all this how impressively He inculcates a great principle of Christianity, that man should be a brother to his fellow man. How exactly does the teaching of St. Paul comply with the teaching of Christ: "*Bear you one another's burdens, and so shall you fulfill the law of Christ.*" (Gal. vi.—2.) Help therefore one another, console one another, encourage one another. "Kindness is the word." Kind deeds and kind words ofttimes awaken new life and new energy in a depressed soul; and these kind acts, rising to heaven, plead for the benefactor and bring into his own soul benedictions from the throne of God.

A gardener or a florist sees one of his beautiful lilies wilting; his heart throbs in pity. He is attached to this flower; for he is a true botanist and loves plants and their blossoms with the enthusiasm of one who has given his life to the study of his cherished pursuit. He probes for the cause, or probably his skill tells him immediately what the cause is. With tender nursing he coaxes the plant back into health. His joy increases each day; and when it has regained its former beauty and fragrance, he rejoices as a mother only can when

she nurses her sick babe back into healthy life. But how many a human lily, how many a heart lily, declines and fades away, and no one asks the cause! The signs of blight are on the cheek, but there is none anxious to dispel the blight by kindness. No one sees the heart. No one estimates the sorrow. No one cares. It is only a human being "crushed in the harness—one of the day's mishaps!" How many a woe has gnawed and gnawed at a heart once resplendent with the blossoms of affection and benevolence until the heart-plant is destroyed. Alas! had kindness come in time, had kindness, which is to the aching heart what dew-drops are to the flower parched by the scorching sun—had kindness come in time, the poor wilting heart would have been made again verdant with the dews of hope, friendship, and resolution. Kindness dispels despondency as the sun dissolves the mists. Kindness awakens a new life in the mournful soul as spring calls forth new life from winter's dreary tomb. And just as early summer is radiant in her glories, thus kindness fills the sad heart with the summer of new joys. Ah! kindness, how much the human heart is indebted to you! You are the angel of solace! You are the Cyrenian lifting many a cross from many a bleeding heart!

There is many a sympathetic person whose heart vibrates with pity for the sorrows of others, but this pity never finds expression. It dies where it received birth, and is buried without any mark to indicate that it once lived. What good is such sympathy to the sufferer? It is like a diamond in an unexplored mine. It is valueless. It banishes no grief, it heals no wound, it lifts no cross. Conceal not your sympathy. Let the chords of your heart so vibrate that sorrow and affliction and des-

pondency may hear the vibrations and be charmed into a new and happy life.

There is, however, a false sympathy—the sympathy of a serpent—which allures while it destroys. A person, under the guise of an angel, will call upon another whose heart is breaking. You may hear her say: "I shall go and be very sympathetic. I shall breathe compassion and be pity herself. Then I shall get all the news." O base hypocrite! O miserable, debased, despicable fiend! I doubt not that the devils in hell would turn from you in disgust! You are not a Cyrenian! You lift no cross from the mangled shoulders of Jesus, but your unsurpassed villainy crushes the thorny cross into the heart of one of His creatures!

Never divert kindness from its fair purposes. It is a sacred quality of the human heart—an emanation of the Spirit of Christ. Christian kindness and the sacrifices springing from it are about the only redeeming features in the history of the human race. In its most exalted form it accomplishes great things. Indeed, why are some few called by the glorious name of Liberator? Why does history honor a great, benevolent genius who lifts the burden of oppression, the cross of slavery, from the shoulders of millions? Why, I ask, does history and posterity honor him with the noblest title—Liberator? It is because he struck the shackles from the bodies and the souls of countless thousands. He lifted the heavy cross of bondage and oppression from the abject forms of his fellow men. For this the admirer of liberty will in every age praise his greatness, laud his kindness, and proclaim him the Liberator of his people.

Among the distinguished benefactors of humanity we place the self-sacrificing missionary. Read the

touching story which Bancroft and Gilmary Shea give of the heroic achievements of these saintly pioneers of the Gospel of Christ in our land. The northern tier of states, the great lakes and Canada, still retain the memory of those celebrated Cyrenians. They lifted the cross from the savage—the cross of darkness pressing upon the intellect and heart. They pointed to heaven and told them of Jesus who loved them; they infused Christianity into the savage soul, and they did this, too, without Mauser rifle or the Maxim gun.

Various are the crosses which afflict mankind. They are almost as numerous as man is different. For some, sickness is the cross; for others, temptation; for others, doubts of faith; and thus they continue and multiply beyond enumeration. Enter the sick room, see the infirm prostrated under his cross. How he longs to leave his bed, to enjoy once more the sunshine, to breath the exhilarating air. His eyes are dim. His mother is perhaps in tears. Speak kindly, cheerfully, hopefully; and notice the tears disappearing from the mother's eyes. See her child's dim eyes brighten with a new light. Note how much you will have done to raise the burdensome cross from off mother and child. If poverty is an accompaniment of this sickness, as it often is, and you open your purse to banish poverty, what a noble work of kindness you have performed! You depart with the prayers of the sorrowful; you have diminished the weight of their cross; you have acquired for yourself a guaranty for heaven.

Behold another suffering from the unrelenting impulses of temptation. He or she wonders whether there ever will be a cessation. Bravely they have thus far battled against the snares of evil, still they are sinking under their cross. The Poet (Pope) says that, "Reason

is the compass, but passion is the gale." Yea; and this gale becomes a hurricane, dashing the poor soul upon the breakers of sin—destroying, engulfing a soul which might have been saved had some one been near to encourage hope and dissipate despondency. How many a person contending with discouragement, failure, or disappointment, has struggled for a time; but ultimately surrendered to the demon of despair and consequently ended his life by his own hand. Would that some friend had been there to rescue him from his torments, to lift his terrible cross from his shoulders! How many might be saved from self-destruction by the ministering angel of kindness! But there was no friend to arouse the drooping energy, no kindness to infuse hope, no generous hand to protect the enfeebled victim. Brooding, melancholy brooding dethroned reason; and despondency, gaining the ascendancy, plunges the dagger into the woeful heart.

Oh, be kind! You know not how much you can do by kindness to heal the festering wound. Be the good Samaritan, pour into the bleeding heart the oil of charity, of hope, and of faith. One cross lifted off the heart of pain gives you a mortgage on heaven. You will be a Cyrenian, and the mother of Jesus will pray that your kindness may bring you many a joy; and when you have reached your calvary, Jesus will affectionately bend over you, will lift your cross from your weary heart, will crown you with the laurels of a soul-saver.

SIXTH STATION.

Veroncia Wipes the Face of Jesus.

My Dear Brethren : At this station you behold sympathy wiping the face of Jesus. He is toiling up the rugged hill for man's redemption. Veronica sees the blood trickling down His sacred forehead into His eyes, blinding Him and adding to His great suffering. A compassionate thought, like the breath of an angel, moves through her heart ; she forces her way through the crowd and offers her Redeemer a cloth to dry His blood-covered face. O happy Veronica ! O glorious privilege ! to be allowed to alleviate the agony of your Saviour ; to be so intimately associated with the redemption of mankind. Compassion won another victory and was crowned with new laurels. Jesus leaves the impression of His holy countenance upon the linen as a memorial of her sympathy and His passion, as a pledge that her tenderness would not be forgotten. Ah, compassion transforms men and women into angels, refines the heart with its own emotions, and gives new voice to the soul !

Jesus teaches us at this station that we should never permit our hearts to be barred against the tears of woe or the moan of anguish. We should also learn from this station to console and assist the innocent, though the crowd be arrayed against them. Jesus approved the devotion of Veronica, and He ever looks with favor

upon those who never betray confidence or abandon distress. The heart frozen by the coldness of its own selfishness will avoid the jeers of the rabble by being always on the scoffing side ; but what it gains is dearly bought. A person of such congealed temperament is usually found among a frigid class. Masked, he may try to appear in other circles, may succeed for a time, but his cold, selfish heart will betray him. He needs the warming, refining influence of a long purgatory to thaw his soul into a semblance of Veronica's.

You think, my dear friends, that she was notably favored. You are right ; and we should rejoice, since we are human, that there were a few human creatures on that sad Good Friday to maintain the honor of the human race. Amid the gloom of that day there are some rays of joy emanating from a few human hearts. Calvary and the Deluge are similar in this respect—all were not bad. A few were found who voiced the noble sentiment of undegraded human nature.

Yes, Veronica was favored. You believe that thus a bond of friendship, ever radiant with divine grace, remained between Jesus and Veronica. There is every reason to confide in this belief. The impression of His holy countenance is a constant memorial of His friendship for her. Veronica is compensated beyond any other of His friends. I mean, of course, external compensation, and this external compensation is no small evidence of the internal reward which her soul obtained then and at the hour of her death; still, what is all this manifestation of friendship and love, compared with what He has bestowed upon you and upon me. He gave her an outline of His sacred features. He gives you Himself in the Most Blessed Sacramnet of the Altar. Before He began His terrible passion, He thought of you, of the crosses

you would bear ; and in the greatness of His heart bequeathed you Himself in this most mysterious manner. We were not there to sympathize with Him. We were only present with our sins to burden and oppress Him more ; still, in the beneficence of His inexhaustible love He forgot, or seemed to forget for a time, the sorrows of the morrow in order to give us a perpetual proof of His compassion, a sacred pledge of His assistance, an irrevocable covenant of His great love ! He instituted the Holy Eucharist—an imperishable compact with His faithful followers.

With what fidelity is the promise, "*I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world,*" verified in this great sacrament of Christ's love. He abides in the tabernacles of our churches, where every Catholic may approach Him. The humble, despised negro and Leo XIII. have equal rights in this respect. Both may come to Him. For both He died ! Each has an immortal soul—a scintillation of the divinity, ransomed by the blood of Christ ! The peasant child and the princess, the beggar and the king, the semi-barbarous, illiterated inhabitant of Africa and the most celebrated scholar, kneel before the same Redeemer and are equal in His presence. No distinction of wealth or poverty, weakness or power, illiteracy or erudition, social superiority or indigence, is considered by the Saviour of all. One distinction—only one has influence : it is the distinction of a pure soul from one who rejects God's grace !

Here before the tabernacle you may come, and before your Redeemer pour forth the sorrows of your cross-laden souls. Each with his own burden of grief may supplicate for aid in the Christian warfare of this troubled life. Here in His presence you can speak with Him as

a confiding child speaks to an affectionate father ; here you can make your requests ; here you can offer your thanksgiving ; here you can ask Him to lighten your cross ; or, if it be His will that you should carry its undiminished weight, here you can beseech Him to give you sufficient strength and continued fortitude to endure its pangs ! In every trouble you should come to Him. In your joy, too, you ought not be a stranger at His tabernacle. Sadness and merriment should equally seek Him : the one to implore counsel and relief, the other to importune for protection and guidance. Before beginning any undertaking, when undecided what to do, when the soul is perplexed in any way, you should come to Him and entreat Him to help you.

Ah, how many a silent, earnest, grateful prayer has been whispered by the human heart to Jesus in the lonely tabernacle ! Genius has bowed before Him and asked for new light ! The poet has placed on His altar the bays of a grateful heart and the laurels given by an appreciating people. The scientist, honored by the chaplet of a nation's praise, has brought that chaplet to Him—a token of gratitude ! The sculptor and painter have come to Him for inspiration and skill ! Yes, genius in every field of endeavor has brought to Jesus in the tabernacle the first fruits of his research and the prodigious results of his ardent, studious, skilful soul ! The peasant, the genius, and the saint have all breathed forth their disappointments and successes, their joys and their sorrows to Him. To each and to everyone asking with pure motives He has been a tender-hearted Veronica, soothing their bruised hearts, accepting their offerings, and blessing them with Christian fortitude.

You, my dear friends, should avail yourselves of every opportunity to visit the Blessed Sacrament. The young

should come and pray that Jesus may arm them with the shield of faith—faith to repulse every insinuation or attack of the enemy—faith when the storms of opposition and failure are the fiercest—faith when the lowering clouds of despondency are the gloomiest—faith which in peace or warfare will animate the soul and keep it safe in the arms of God's protection. The middle-aged who have probably felt the weight of their cross ought to come and importune for relief. Life has already been for them a galling load. They have borne some of the burden and the heat. The air-castles of youth were dissolved by the stern hand of reality. They are growing weary and disappointed. I would say to them: Do not be discouraged. You are only in the birthday of your existence. Eternity is endless. You are only advancing to your Calvary, from which, with the help of your Redeemer, you will ascend to a place where there are no crosses. Come, repose your trust in the Blessed Sacrament. Here you will find courage for your trials, help for your afflictions, and joys for your confidence.

The aged, also, who must soon lay down their earthly burdens, should come to Jesus in the sacrament of His love and return thanks for all the graces and favors they have obtained. The rugged, craggy course of life has been toilsome enough, but they have overcome its faintness and discouragements. Have they not much for which to be grateful? How many have fainted and been lost by the way! You still survive, and survive as ardent worshippers of Christ's passion and death. You need not be urged to love Jesus in the Sacrament of the Altar; for how often you have knelt and prayed before Him when your heart wept and your soul was crucified! Experience has taught

you the efficacy of the Holy Eucharist. Now turn your thoughts more fervently toward Him. With hearts brimming with gratitude, thank Him for the many expressions of His love and constancy ; for the many times He was a Veronica and a Cyrenian to you, helping you to carry your cross and wiping away the anguish of disappointment and the cruelty of woe ! Entreat Him to bless your last days with peace, to fortify you in your last illness with the sacraments of His Church, to bend over your last moan and wipe away the cold, damp sweat of death with the tender touch of His mercy.

Alas ! what about those indifferent Catholics, those bad Catholics who are strangers to the Blessed Sacrament ! Their hearts are petrified by sin and their souls dried up by the arid desires of debauchery. They are ingrates ; for though they abuse God's bountifulness, still, He is kind to them. The air they breathe in the act of sin, is not theirs, but His. He permits them to live. He supplies them with opportunities to redeem their follies, so that if they are damned, they need blame none but themselves. Instead of coming to Mass on Sunday, they remain away. Instead of attending the Stations of the Cross during this solemn season of Lent, and offering with contrite hearts the linen of repentance to compassionate the wounded countenance of their Saviour, they are loafing in some barroom. They are insolent and wretched. They are more cruel in their insults to Jesus than were the Jews. They believe in Him, still they despise Him ; they acknowledge He is merciful, yet they spurn His mercies ; they confess He is their God, but they crucify Him again !

Now, good Catholics ought to make frequent visits to the Blessed Sacrament, to atone for all this indifference, for all this abuse of bad Catholics. Besides pray-

ing for themselves and thanking Jesus for His goodness, they should make acts of reparation for the wickedness of nominal Catholics, for the denials and slanders of infidels, Jews, and unbelieving Christians. How many a sacrilege has been perpetrated upon the most august Sacrament of the Altar since Judas, with treason in his soul, received Jesus! With all the compassion of your soul strive to make reparation for so much infamy fostered against your Saviour and your God.

Do not only visit Him; but invite Him, receive Him into your hearts to be the sustenance of your souls and a pledge of a happy immortality. Welcome Him to your hearts as you did many years ago, when you were innocent and young; when you received Him for the first time; when your souls were inflamed with the most ardent devotion and earnest love. Then it was not necessary to urge you to go to communion, to scold you, to threaten you. No; the ardency of an innocent heart impelled you to Him. Your soul was enkindled with the fervency of your faith. Your only regret was that your heart was not larger, that the powers of your soul were not more comprehensive, that your life was not more perfect for His sake! You were Veronicas then, extending to Him the purity of your souls to mitigate the cruelty of bad Christians!

SEVENTH STATION.

Jesus Falls the Second Time.

My Dear Brethren : At this station you meditate upon the second fall of Jesus under His cross. Notwithstanding that the Cyrenian is assisting Him, He grows weaker and weaker. Faintness again comes over Him, He totters and falls—falls again under the weight of sin. What a horrible burden presses Him to the ground ! The sins of all mankind are upon Him ! The sins of every human creature from Adam to the last child who will be born !

Since this sacred tragedy was caused by sin, let us at this station consider the appalling, destructive nature of mortal sin. You cannot conceive its repugnant character ; you can form no picture of it as it appears in the sight of God. Yet, you may acquire some notion of its heinousness and destructiveness by pondering upon some of its consequences. Strange to say, it had its origin in heaven, and there, too, it displayed its blighting attributes. Lucifer rebelled. He challenged the wisdom and power of the Almighty. His punishment was proportionate to his crime. And what a crime that must be for which an eternal punishment is inflicted ! One mortal sin robs the great Archangel of all his brilliancy, shears him of his glory, and hurls him into the abyss of hell !

Sacred Scripture tells you how the devastating spectre of sin entered the peaceful, happy Garden of Paradise.

It assumed, as it usually does, the fascinating power of allurement. But it desolated while it charmed. Adam and Eve were transformed by its touch. Their joy was turned into lamentations, their peace into contention,—their hearts, like the earth, became productive of thorns. The happiness of Paradise was changed to misery ; the nobility of human nature was disfigured ; and our first parents were banished from the heaven in which they were created, just as the angels were cast out of the celestial court of their God. Thus hell was populated ; and Adam and Eve and all their progeny were doomed to tread the thorny ways of trouble. Human nature now wore the brand of sin upon the soul ; and the body was afflicted by that brand, just as the soul suffers from the loathsome ailments of the body. Sin now trod upon the heels of sin. Men became defiled. Cain slew His brother. The earth was reddened by the blood of murder. Crime multiplied. God looked down upon the earth and saw the frightful prevalence of sin. He resolved to purify, as far as possible, the human race without destroying it entirely. The Deluge came, and man together with his sins was washed from the face of the earth. This was only a check to sin—a presentiment of its enormity. It still, however, had its desolating roots in the heart of mankind ; and the few who survived the overwhelming disaster soon propagated sin as well as the human race. Sodom and Gomorrha were destroyed by fire on account of the lewdness of their inhabitants. Sin has inflicted terrible calamities upon the earth. Nations have risen against nations. Blood from the hearts of the combatants has saturated the earth. Famine and pestilence have ravished man by their devastating, devouring, merciless frenzy !

Jesus came—came not to destroy by fire or to overwhelm with water. He came to lift man up by means of His love, to teach him the priceless value of a human soul, to adorn that soul with His graces. He wished to impart to it something of that beauty which embellished it before Adam had felt the smart and depression of sin. At this station then you behold your Saviour, the Son of His Eternal Father, bleeding from wounds and falling from exhaustion under the accumulated sins of the human race. The sins of Adam were upon Him, the crime of Cain, the appalling lewdness of Sodom and Gomorrha, your sins and mine,—all the sins which were ever committed or ever will be committed, were casting His sacred, mangled form to the earth. What agony then was in that Sacred Heart! What frightful hideousness around about Him! His Eternal Father was accustomed to look with pleasure upon His Divine Son garmented in human nature: "*This is My Beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.*" But now Almighty God is angry. He strikes His own Divine Son with the unrelenting hand of justice. Jesus is a Victim! A lacerated Victim! A sin-laden Victim for the redemption of the human race! His Eternal Father abandons Him to the imprecations of the Jews, to the rage of exulting demons, to the company of accumulated crime. An awful cross is yours, O Saviour of mankind! You see and know the heinousness of sin! In all its black repulsiveness you see it! In all its revolting cruelty, it crushes you to the earth! The demons of hell rejoice as you recoil from the ghastly sight. They exult in their apparent triumph over you. Well may your human heart shudder at the awfulness of the scene. Well may Lucifer and his satellites imagine they have conquered when they see

you prostrated for the second time under their malicious devices. Pause now in your hearts upon the ruin and repulsiveness of sin; and ask pardon for being among those who crushed Him to the earth at this stage of His agonizing journey.

Come, now, let us study our subject more closely. Let us examine the effects of mortal sin on the individual who has fallen within its withering scope. Judge from your own observations. You might not have met all the revolting heinousness of mortal sin, but you have discerned enough to convince you of its blasting effects upon soul and body. Often have you gathered to see the edifying spectacle of children receiving their first communion. Your heart beat in unison with theirs. You were children again. The recollections of your first holy communion were again vividly before you. Perhaps those imparted a pensiveness to your heart; for your cross has been heavy since that never-to-be-forgotten land-mark in the history of your childhood. Well, you noticed a child. Innocence smiled upon her cheek, reflecting the purity of the heart. The heart itself was verdant with the noblest emotions. The hands were clasped in prayer, the eyes modestly cast down, the soul contemplating the coming of Jesus into its humble environment. You forgot for the time that she was human. You were drawn closer to your God. A stillness pervaded your soul. A holy tranquillity filled your heart; you were in the presence of angels. They were around about you in human guise. Ah, it is too sad this holy spell must be broken. These human angels leave the Church with heavenly joy in their little hearts. They are caressed by friends, while tears of happiness mantle the cheek of many a happy parent.

But observe this once beautiful child in thirty years afterward, or perhaps less. Sin has disfigured that soul. The angelic emotions of childhood are banished by the invasion of debasing passions. The home of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament was forsaken for the haunts of iniquity. The lofty aspirations of the heart are now a corpse! Beauty has departed from the once lovely brow! Innocence was strangled in the soul! A desert waste where once all was purity, peace, and joy! Just as a beautiful rose plucked from the vine which gave it life, withers, decays, and is soon despised; so her soul, torn from the vine of Christ's grace, has lost all the exquisite perfume of innocence. The parching, desolating breath of mortal sin has made it an object of disgust.

Take another example from this first communion class which we have been considering. There is a boy. His eyes sparkle with intelligence. The flower of health is upon his cheek. His lips, as if carved by a sculptor, tell of the artistic character of his soul. He has just welcomed his Divine Redeemer into his bosom. He is happy. He is planning. Yes, we may say, planning plans for his future. He is whispering to his Saviour. He is telling Him he will always be good. He will go to holy communion every month. He will never stain his soul or offend his Saviour with a single mortal sin. His little heart expands under these elevating aspirations until he can hardly contain himself. Ah, would that he were always so happy! He little knows the violent force of passion, the magnetic influence of allurement, or the enervating power of bad company, which will break like a storm upon his youth! Were he to remain firm to the fervent resolutions of his first communion day, many of these snares and enticements

would be shunned; his passions, subdued and trained by the benign influence of religion, would ennoble rather than degrade him.

He gradually becomes indifferent. He does not very long communicate monthly. He slowly mixes with bad boys. He means no wrong. His intentions are still good, but not steadfast enough. Youth blossoms in his heart and gives vigor to dangerous desires. He does not restrain himself sufficiently. The curb is too relaxed. He begins to descend the slippery way. He has not kept a strong bridle on himself, and his descent becomes accelerated. He falls—falls into one mortal sin! He shudders at the thought! Mortal sin is a monster to him, but he soon becomes accustomed to its repulsive visage. A burning desire for so-called pleasure impels him onward. Intoxication stimulates and imparts more speed. He is ere long a wreck—a wreck because he did not hold fast to the pledges made on that happy morning of his first communion—a wreck also because his parents were too lax!

Look at him in after years. Where is the health which adorned his cheek? Where is the lustre of the eyes? Where is the charm of the whole face? Where, in a word, is the angel of other days? Mortal sin banished them all! Mortal sin was the blight from hell which parched, wasted, and consumed the innocence of the soul and the comliness of the features. Poor boy! On your first communion day you little knew the blighting, devastating ravishes of sin. It has, however, become your master. Beauty and joy and grace have departed! The flower of spring time is blasted! The pure aspirations are converted into mad desires! The prayers of boyhood are displaced by the blasphemy of age!

Do you think I have been exaggerating, that I have

been sketching an unreal picture? If so, then behold this boy in an hospital of an unmentionable class of incurables, His flesh rotting from his bones. See him in jail; see him in the penitentiary, condemned to a life of hard labor; or see him as his poor, tottering form ascends the scaffold to atone for crimes with his wasted, trembling life. No wonder that Jesus fell under the weight of such sins; no wonder His Sacred Heart recoiled from the heinousness of all the crimes of all the human race; no wonder the blood oozed from His sacred body in the garden, when He beheld all the graces which would be spurned, all the souls which would be lost, notwithstanding His agony and His mercy.

The consequences of mortal sin are most deplorable; for it lays waste the purest things which God has created upon the face of the earth. Let us again illustrate. Take a beautiful statue of marble,—the product of a Canova or an Angelo—strike off a chip from its features, and you destroy the beauty of this prodigious creation of genius. Thousands of artists, maddened by frenzy at your rashness, would clamor for your death. Take one of those matchless productions from the brush of Titian, Raphael, Angelo, or Murillo, and with one spatter of ink mar its countenance, and nations would cry out against you. You may not believe that the great artists of every land live in fellowship with those renowned springs of genius. But let me give you one proof. Napoleon Bonaparte took from Italy Titian's Assumption of the Blessed Virgin; but after the battle of Waterloo nations demanded the restoration of that gem of art to the land of its birth. Again, let a conflagration sweep through some celebrated library where the thoughts of the distinguished dead

are preserved. Thousands of precious volumes are destroyed and millions of people lament the irreparable loss. Unborn generations would mourn the disfigurement of such masterpieces of genius and the destruction of such priceless literary stores; but what are all these compared to a single soul; a soul—not the product of human skill, but the creation of the Infinite God; a soul whose existence is eternal, anyone of its faculties immeasurably surpassing any human invention, and for which Jesus died! Still, just as the chip knocked from the statue, or the spatter of ink in the face of the canvas, one mortal sin disfigures its beauty, demolishes its glory, destroys the destiny for which it was created. But where is the mourning for its loss? Where the sigh for its disfigurement? Where the moan for its destruction? There is none, except it be a mother's tears, a father's lamentation, or the Saviour's grief! Perhaps the poor unfortunate himself, in the bitterness of his remorse, may moan; but these moans usually never go beyond the confines of his own poor, breaking heart.

Schiller gives you some notion of the effects of sin and the consequent pangs of remorse, in his description of De Morse. This despairing victim crys to his friends: "Oh, that I could return once more to peace and innocence! that I hung again a baby on the breast! that I were born a beggar, the meanest in the land, I would labor till the sweat of blood flowed from my brow to purchase the luxury of one sound sleep, the rapture of a single tear!" What agony! what despair! O sin! how terrible are your effects! How you dry up the great springs of hope in the human soul! This poor wretch continues: "There was a time when I could weep with ease! O hour of bliss! O mansion of my

father ! enjoyed with fond enthusiasm, will you never more return ? No more exhale your sweets to cool this burning bosom ? No ! No ! You are gone, gone forever !" Such are the wailings of remorse, such the diadem of sinful pleasure, such the essence of those joys which mortal sin promise.

Still, all is not lost ; still, the tortured soul may find peace ; still, despair may be robbed of its victory. Jesus did not fall the second time in vain. He did not die in vain. The bleeding temples, the lacerated body, stimulate hope and guarantee pardon. From out His lance-pierced heart comes atonement and love and mercy. Remorse may be changed into repentance and despair into hope, in the Sacrament of Penance, which has its source and efficacy in the bleeding heart of Jesus.

EIGHTH STATION.

Jesus Speaks to the Women of Jerusalem.

Here, my dear brethren, you see another expression of sympathy. You rejoice that, even among the ghastly events transpiring on that Good Friday, there are some mitigating features. These women seeing Jesus bleeding from so many wounds and fainting from exhaustion, weep out of commiseration for Him. He sees their tears—holy tears of pity, which bespeak the compassion of their hearts. While He looks upon them, His Sacred Heart is afflicted on their account. He sees the future. He sees the destruction of Jerusalem and the vast number of human beings who will perish of famine and pestilence as well as by the sword of the invader. Since the sacking of Jerusalem occurred only thirty-seven years afterward, these very women and their children were probably among the ill-fated inhabitants. What a harrowing sight this must have been for the Heart of Jesus! How His agony must have been intensified as He saw these tender-hearted women suffering all the miseries of a protracted siege! With this awful scene before the eye of His Divinity, He turns to them and addresses them with tenderness: "*Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me but for yourselves and your children.*"

You may think it strange that such good, sympathetic women should thus perish. Still, you know that this often happens. It sometimes comes to pass that

the comparatively innocent are submerged by the same disaster which destroys the guilty. Yet, you must not forget that after this life there is an everlasting existence, when the good will be rewarded and the tears of agony will be banished from the soul. Besides, this very suffering which appears to us so lamentable, is only a purification for the joys to be.

You must not, however, take a too narrow view of our Divine Saviour's words. They not only applied to the women whom He was addressing, but also to many parents in every age and nation. Many indeed are the tears bad parents may shed for themselves and their children; and good parents also might often shed tears over their lack of wisdom. How copious will be the tears of bad parents, when they stand at the bar of eternal justice to answer for the children whom God intrusted to their keeping; for the children who are reprobates; for the children who are doomed to walk the ways of crime on account of the wickedness and obstinacy of their parents! Many are the parents who had not as much affection for their offspring as the brute manifests. They care not whether they go to school; they care not whether they are trained in the service of God; they care not whether they are on the streets late at night or in worse places. There is only one thing in which most of such parents are interested. It is that their children earn money for them; and this money, the crystallized sweat of their children's labor, is often squandered by parents in drunkenness. Filth and gossip and drunkenness are the stencil marks upon the dissipated faces of this class of parents.

But this is not the only class of bad parents. All parents who do not cultivate in their children's hearts a love for their Creator, are bad; and well might they

weep for themselves and their children. If they weep not before it is too late, they will moan under the weighty hand of affliction ; and their moan will be an echo of more sorrow than tears can tell. The voice of the Almighty One will be heard in their conscience, demanding : "Where are your children ? The voice of their labor, the plaintive plea of their neglect, the consequent howl of rowdyism, and the impoverishment of their souls, have appealed to Heaven against you." Woe to those parents ! Tears will not blot out from the mind of God the remembrance of their cruelty to their children !

Why do not parents learn from a careful nurseryman. See how attentive he is to a young tree. He is constantly solicitious for its healthy development. He waters its roots ; he fertilizes them. He prunes off all encumbrances ; he protects it from the attacks of all destructive insects and other parasites, and directs its growth. Even when well developed he does not forget it or relax his care. Why then has not a parent as much interest in his child—a child with an immortal soul redeemed by the blood of Christ—as the nurseryman, in his tree ? Why does he not water the soul of his child with a Catholic education ? Why does he not prune the soul by judicious restraint and the Sacrament of Penance ? Why does he not fertilize his child's soul with sacramental graces ? Why does he not protect that soul from external attacks and even internal assaults by his own good example and the armor of sound doctrine ? Why does he not direct his child's intellectual and physical growth by prudent counsel ? Should he not be as solicitous for his child's welfare as the nurseryman for a simple tree ? No ; a bad parent does not manifest the same care for his child as a nursery-

man does for a shrub. A bad parent, instead of watering the soul of his child, drys it up by the parching breath of his own influence; instead of fertilizing, he poisons it by his bad example; instead of pruning, he grafts into it his own vile, debasing habits; instead of protection, he gives exposure; instead of directing its development according to the principles of sobriety, industry, and religion, he makes it a "chip of the old block," which, in this case, is about equivalent to the saying: "He makes his child an imp of hell."

Do such children hear Mass and attend the other divine services on Sunday? No. Why not? Because the parents never go to church, nor do they encourage their children to go. About the only time such parents go to church is when they are corpses, and then they must be borne in—perhaps against their will. Do those children say their prayers night and morning? No; for the parents never say them. Are those children nourished by the graces of the sacraments? No; nor are their parents. Do those children attend a Catholic school? By no means. If they attend a school at all, it is not a Catholic school. At a Catholic school they would learn to say their prayers, be instructed for the worthy reception of the sacraments, be trained to know, love, and serve their God. All this is too much religion for such parents to condone. Their children must be like themselves, destined to the environments of blasphemy, drunkenness, gossip, filth, and quarrelling. Other parents do not send their children to a Catholic school because, forsooth, it has not tone enough; or because such approbation of a Catholic school may not be the best for their own social and political prosperity, or that of their children. The eternal interest of the children must be weighed against what is supposed to

be their temporal gain; and the former is only a feather compared with the ponderous gravity of the latter. Alas! poor, foolish parents, you are sewing the seeds of sorrow and you will harvest an abundant crop of misfortune! Well may you weep over the calamities which will come upon yourselves and your children!

Parents who are good themselves may prove bad guardians of their children. They are too indulgent to them, pet them too much, and overlook their mischievous inclinations. They are good themselves, and by some blind infatuation they think their children can do no wrong. Their children neglect their prayers sometimes, but this is nothing in the eyes of such affectionate parents. On account of some whim or another they refrain from hearing Mass, but this is easily pardoned; they begin to associate with vicious company and to be out late at night, yet this conduct fails to bring more than a slight reprimand. When such a child reaches the age of fifteen, the parents become timid. They are afraid even to advise him, and the child's waywardness goes steadily on. The words of Sacred Scripture are verified: "*A horse not broken becomes stubborn, and a child left to himself will become headstrong.*" (Eccli. xxx.—8.) If the father attempts to correct the child, the mother interferes; if the mother chastises, the father scolds. Ofttimes quarrels arise between parents on this account. The child is a witness of this interchange of harsh words and soon realizes he needs fear no danger. Ere long he vindicates the truth of another passage in Ecclesiasticus (xxx.—9): "*Give thy son his way and he shall make thee afraid.*" It were better for child and parents, if the latter had been more judicious. On account of such indulgence many a good parent has reared a bad child. Follow, then, the counsel

of the Sacred Scriptures: "*Give him not liberty in his youth, and wink not at his devices.*" (Eccli. xxx.—11.)

You may be puzzled now as to what you should do to train your child properly. You may ask: "What can parents do? We are blamed for every fault of our children, though we do for them all we can." Well, let me say to you: Send your children to your parochial school. There they will be taught to say their prayers, will be instructed for the worthy reception of the sacraments, and will receive much profitable advice. But you must do more; for you know your children are not all the time in school. We do not advocate savage punishment; because this treatment, instead of effecting a cure, often aggravates the disease. No good comes from cruel abuse. If frequently inflicted, the child is benumbed, looses self-respect, and is discouraged. The young mind and the young heart are blunted; and after a time the child cares little for punishment and less for its parents. Prudent correction is all right; but good example and wise counsel are much better. Advise your children. Point out to them the things they should avoid. Do not become impatient or discouraged, if your advices bear not immediate fruit; because your children transgress in the afternoon the admonition given in the morning, do not despair. Set them good example and advise them, advise them, advise them. Good counsel must have its effects. Your words will sink deeply into their souls—they will leave an impression which time cannot eradicate. Teach them to be self-respecting, self-sustaining, self-correcting; teach them the words of the poet (Burns), "Cautious, prudent self-control is wisdom's root." Teach them industry also, and by all means instil reverence for Almighty God and love for the Blessed Sacrament of

the Altar. Infuse into their souls a taste for good books. These will prove to be reliable anchors in the storms of life. Buy a few occasionally. You may answer, that you have not the means. Yet you will concede that there are many families which spend a few dollars every year in things without which they could do very well.

Train your children in this manner; and when they leave home to battle with the stern realities of life, they will avoid the dangers in which so many perished. You will learn with joy of their honest efforts and hear with pleasure of their well deserved success. They will be the pride and solace of the evening of your life. Many will be the prayers you will offer for them and many will be the appeals they will make to heaven for you. They will bring no tears to your eyes, no shame to your cheeks, no sorrow to your hearts. When you are dead and your bodies lie silently in the cemetery, you will still live in their memory. Your good advices and those excellent old maxims will ever reverberate in their hearts. When tempted to do wrong, when opposition cross the path of their most earnest efforts, when disappointments appall, your words will come to them as angels of light and messengers of peace. They will be incessantly directing, administering, protecting, and sustaining them in the darkest nights of adversity and in the enchanting dangers of prosperity.

What a noble thing it is—how inspiring, to see a young man or a girl away from home, contending successfully with the various temptations of life. Like some majestic ocean ship, upon which the storm beats and the convulsive waters threaten to engulf, but which plows onward, fearless and strong, thus such a youth, in the majesty of his Christian confidence, goes onward, though the storms of temptation break mercilessly

upon him, though the angry sea of opposition and disappointment strive to engulf him, and though the rocks of disaster are near. His light-house is the counsel of his parents; his polar star, God; and his compass, Christian virtue.

Then, I say to you again, train your children that you may have no tears to shed. Inculcate sound advice and Christian virtues. Your task is an arduous one, is a continuous one; but your happiness and your children's welfare depend upon you doing your duty. If they are good when young, they are likely to be good in after years. The words of another poet still hold true in our age: "The child is father of the man." Train your children then to be good, and when they are old they will not bring sorrow to your heart. And when you are dead, many will be the prayers they will say for you and great will be your reward with God

NINTH STATION.

Jesus Falls the Third Time under the Cross.

My Dear Brethren : Jesus is now approaching the summit of Calvary. Though He has not now far to go to reach the spot where the cross will be made sacred, nevertheless faintness overcomes Him, His sight once more grows dim, His head reels, and He falls to the earth the third time. Wonderful that angels did not lift Him up and console Him. In the beginning of His passion an angel came to comfort Him. Is He now abandoned by His Eternal Father ? Are the angels remiss in their duty ? Is His own divinity indifferent as to what the God-Man may suffer ? Marvellous it may appear to you that Almighty God did not proclaim from the highest heavens that His justice was appeased and Adam's sin forever blotted out by this prostrated, bleeding form of His Divine Son. "Why did not His own divinity assert itself," you may ask, "and declare the ransom and redemption of mankind by this third fall ? Surely He had suffered sufficiently to redeem man. Even so much was not necessary." You are right ; man could have been ransomed without so great agony ; but Jesus wished to give a convincing proof of His love and mercy to the hardest hearts. He saw what want of faith would in every age render man's heart cold and doubtful. Hence He wanted to establish an unconquerable proof of His mercy and benevolence —a proof which would carry conviction to the most

obdurate hearts—a proof which would be consolation to the weak and hope to the sinner—a proof unequalled for magnanimity, anguish, and mercy!

Many are the lessons we may learn from the Stations of the Cross. At this one Jesus teaches that you must not succumb to the weight of your cross. Though He falls often, He rises again, thus imparting a memorable lesson which should be engraven in your hearts. What is this lesson? It is this; that though you fall, you should not remain prostrated. When overthrown by ill-fortune, by enemies, or by sin, you must not despair; when your soul is barren; when sin has made it a dwelling-place; when you feel that God must have forsaken you on account of your wickedness,—do not relinquish yourself to the weight of your cross, but take courage; remember that Jesus fell this third time to teach you how to rise. "But how am I going to rise?" some one may inquire. "How am I to cast off this heavy burden of sin? How can I return and ask pardon from the God Whom I have so wilfully abused? Where can I find that peace and light-heartedness of other days?" Let me reply: All this can be accomplished in the Sacrament of Penance.

Yes, in this sacrament which is so much abused, you can find tranquillity of soul and favor with your God. Yea, I say abused, for a vast number of our dissenting brethren have many unkind things to say of this sacrament of consolation. Many of the most learned among them admire the Catholic system. They praise the self-sacrifice of many Catholics, the heroism of Catholic priests, and the angel-like charity of Catholic Sisters among the dead and dying. They give also considerable credit to the Catholic Church for preserving literature, promoting art, and stimulating research in the

sciences ; but when it is a question of confession, of the Sacrament of Penance, then few indeed have any word of praise or commendation. Instead of thanking Jesus for His infinite kindness to the human race, they pour out their treasury of abuse. If they can find some so-called ex-priest, though he be only a sham or a degraded prison convict, they take him kindly, give him the use of their churches, or hire a hall for him to revile the sacred work of God. Anything to perpetuate their claims to Protestantism ; anything to reveal the abominations (?) of the confessional ; anything to unmask the villainy (?) of the Catholic Church. Glorious efforts of Protestantism, these ! But this has been more or less the case since the time Jesus healed the paralytic. The Jews on that occasion were scandalized, or appeared to be scandalized, when Jesus said to the man sick of the palsy : "*Son, be of good heart, thy sins are forgiven thee.*" (Math. ix.—2.)

Still, notwithstanding the bitter invectives employed to denounce the Sacrament of Penance, it is one of the greatest works of Christ's mercy. Had we not this sacrament, where would we go for solace in trouble ? The breaking heart, the burdened soul, would be inconsolable. In this sacrament Jesus shows His mercy for the human race. Without it, how could the merits of His passion and death be applied to poor, frail man ? Who would dare approach holy communion ? See, confession is a necessary auxiliary for the worthy reception of Jesus in the sacrament of His love. It exemplifies the infinite wisdom of the Man-God ; for by this sacrament the soul is purified and prepared to welcome its Saviour in the Sacrament of the Altar. In the Sacrament of Penance the innocent acquire new strength and perseverance ; the guilty are cleansed of

their sins and are restored to the friendship of God ; the sinner who has forsaken God for years and whose heart is now harrowed with remorse and despair, may go there and find relief for every woe. Yes, remorse may go there and find peace ; despair may go there and find hope ; tears may go there and find joys ; the sinner of every kind may go there and receive the garb of innocence. Were more use made of the confessional, there would be fewer suicides, less despair, and more confidence in Christ, the Saviour of the world.

Yet, some may say : "It is so hard to go to confession. It is most embarrassing ; it is repugnant to human nature ; it is humiliating." But just look at the prostrated form of Jesus at this station, lacerated and bleeding, and you will acknowledge that confession is as easy as it ought to be. Nay, more ; you will admit that it is a very easy way, after all, to seek and obtain pardon. Besides, observe how Jesus Himself pleads with the sinner. He ingratiates Himself into the soul at a favorable time when the soul is prone to listen. The memory recalls the past, and Jesus compares with the sinner a life of innocence with a life of guilt. He speaks to him of childhood, of its peace, of its aspirations ; and contrasts it with the present gloom of sin, the melancholy and riot of the soul. Then, as if taking the sinner aside by the hand, He consoles him. Tells him : "Now, you must not despair. Come to confession ; all will be forgotten, the record of every sin will be destroyed. You have not courage ? Then look at My hands and feet pierced by nails for you. See My side laid open by a lance, that you may have courage and may seek mercy where the lance sought the last faint spark of life. Do you consider Me cruel who has evinced so much love for you ? Do you think I shall spurn you for whom I

died? Now come and show yourself to my priest; come and find peace and lightness of spirit in the sacrament instituted by Me for the consolation of burdened hearts and troubled souls."

Our Divine Lord consigns the sinner to the keeping of a guardian angel, and a conflict arises. The devil refuses to relinquish his claims, and urges the sinner to remain as he is. "You cannot return," he says; "you never can be forgiven. You have sinned beyond any hope of pardon. You have polluted your soul There is no salvation for you. You have spurned God's graces so often; you have destroyed innocence; you have ruined yourself; and now do you think of pardon?" In this or a similiar manner, Satan tries to plunge the sinner into despair and self-destruction. But the guardian angel whispers: "You can yet find mercy. Remember the words of your Saviour: '*I came not to call the just but the sinner to repentance.*' He forgave the great sinner, Magdalene; and not only forgave her, but had the greatest compassion for her. Did you ever hear of Him speaking harsh words to a penitent? He knows your frailty, He knows the frailty of human nature, and consequently established a means by which every contrite penitent may obtain pardon. Come now to confession and every sin will be blotted out forever." The sinner wavers between hope and despair. The devil does not desist. He strives to dissipate the first faint rays of hope; and argues: "Why, it is unreasonable for you to think of going to confession. You cannot keep your resolution. You will fall again, and at every fall heap curses on your own head. Don't go to confession. Wait until you are old; until the passions have lost their fire; until you are fully resolved to serve God. In your old age there will be time enough to

repent. Then there will be less danger of your violating your sacred promise in the Sacrament of Penance." Thus his enemy represents himself as a friend interested in his salvation and unwilling that he should offend God by violated resolutions.

But the angel asks him: "Do you know whether you will ever be old? Do you know whether you will have time to become reconciled to God if you neglect this opportunity? And if you have time sufficient, do you know whether Jesus will accept the offer of an exhausted heart? You need not now trouble yourself about a relapse into sin. You have the present moment. Will you have the future? You know not; then don't trouble yourself about it. Two things are now necessary—sorrow for your sins and a resolution of amendment. Come then to confession. Cast aside all embarrassment. Jesus is your Saviour; He died that you may live with Him everlastingly. He has sent me to you to beg you to come to confession, to tell you He is your friend, to assure you of His great love. Come, therefore, have courage, and the merits of your Redeemer's death will banish all remorse and despair and sin from your soul." The sinner yields to the entreaties of the angel. He confesses his sins. The words of absolution are pronounced, and through the efficacy of Christ's mercy the chains of sin fall from the oppressed soul. He is free again, and heaven rejoices. O happy penitent! Your joys are full. What rapture seizes your heart! You entered the confessional trembling and a slave of hell! You leave it rejoicing and a child of heaven! Remorse has departed with its destroying pangs; despair with its maddened energy impelling to self-slaughter, is expelled; and now peace reigns where riot held sway!

Should, however, the sinner not listen to Jesus and His angel pleading with him; should he obey the insinuations of Satan and say to himself: "There is time enough. I will remain as I am until satiety has surfeited me and old age cast its coldness about me." Then may the words of Jeremias, referring to Jerusalem, be applied by Jesus to the sinner: "*Who shall have pity on thee, O Jerusalem? or who shall bemoan thee, or who shall go to pray for thy peace? Thou hast forsaken Me, saith the Lord. Thou hast gone backward; and I will stretch out My hand against thee; and I will destroy thee; I am weary of entreating thee.*" (Jerem. xx.—5.) Yes, when the patience of Jesus is exhausted, He may turn upon the sinner and address him: "Who shall have pity on thee, O sinner? In the day of thy woe, who shall have pity on thee? Who shall calm thy aching brow or assuage thy agitated heart? Who shall supply a remedy for remorse or guilt, or for the ravages of despair? Who shall bemoan thy desolation? Who shall go to pray for thy peace? Shall thy enemies or thy tempter, or shall thy sins cry aloud that tranquillity may come into thy soul from which they banished all peace? Thou hast forsaken Me. Thou hast forsaken My Church. Thou hast abandoned My precepts—the safeguards of thy peace. Thou hast not hearkened to My voice pleading with thee to be merciful to thyself. Thou hast despised My passion, thou hast rejected My graces, thou hast gone backward; and now I will stretch out My hand against thee. I will destroy thee, thou unfruitful tree. I am weary of entreating thee. Thou mayest now follow thy satanical guide to thy ruin."

In this manner the Saviour of mankind, notwithstanding all His love for the human race, will address the

obstinate sinner. Jeremias' prophecy in regard to Jerusalem was verified, and the same will be confirmed in regard to the sinner at the Last Judgment, when Jesus will declare : "*Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire* (Math. xxv.—41), if not before that awful day. Let us hope that there will not be a single member of this congregation who will refuse God's mercy during this Lenten time. Let me exhort you to pray for one another, to plead with one another, to beg one another to receive the sacraments during this holy season. Let parents encourage their children to comply with this sacred duty ; and let children beg their careless parents not to forget the great sacraments of Christ's mercy and love. Let them by their own noble example lead their parents to Christian peace and to the tabernacle of their God. Let us all look with compassion upon this third painful fall of Jesus under His cross, and draw new aspirations from His boundless love, and new resolutions never to offend Him again.

TENTH STATION.

Jesus is Stripped of His Garments.

My Dear Brethren: Our Divine Lord has at last reached the summit of Calvary. His toilsome, painful journey is ended and the executioners begin to disrobe Him. But what pain does this not cause? His garments are cleaving to His wounds. They have settled into the rents made in His shoulders by the scourges. The weight of the cross pressed the garments into the wounds, and as the executioners strip Him, they tear off with the garments His sacred flesh. His body bleeds anew. His sacred blood trickles down into the earth, sanctifying Calvary by its touch. The intense pain of every wound is concentrated in His adorable Heart, every wound a dagger, but none merciful enough to extinguish life! Every wound proclaiming the awful malice of sin! Every wound a guarantee of His love!

Does not this station impress upon your souls a useful lesson? Does it not teach you to divest yourselves of sin by the Sacrament of Penance, and strip yourselves of sinful habits. Since mortal sin is so great a monstrosity, so repulsive to God, so revengeful on your Redeemer, can you deliberately establish an alliance with it? Can you, after reflecting upon the pain endured at this station, willingly rise up against your Saviour and declare you have no heart to appreciate His mercy or to sympathize with His anguish. Strip yourselves then of sin, avoid its occasions, and dislodge

every pernicious habit from your hearts. If you are inflated with pride, look upon your Saviour at this station. If you are arrogant, behold the meekness of Jesus. Banish these vices and all other vices from your souls. They only make you little, though you may think they add to your importance. Pride begets fools, and arrogance is but the frown of ignorance.

It is not now my intention to exhort you, in a special manner, to avoid the disgusting and dwarfing vices of pride and arrogance ; but to direct your minds to contemplate the accursed habits of blasphemy and drunkenness. Gaze in astonishment upon the body of Jesus, all bruised and torn ; and tell me can you insult His holy name ? Can you, in this church, go before that tenth station and with polluted tongue swear by that sacred name ? Can you come here before the altar, in His presence, and defy Him by using filthy profanity in which you commingle His name ? "O God !" you would say, "we are not so bad ; we would not dare such malice ; we would not desecrate this holy place !" Then why dare abuse Him elsewhere ? You think the church is a sacred place, and in this you are right ; but what makes this place sacred ? Is it not the presence of your Redeemer ? Still, is not the whole world filled with the presence of your God ? Is not every spot on the face of the earth too hallowed for you or anybody else to speak the august name of God with defiled lips ?

How repulsive it is to hear a Catholic use with disrespect that sacred name amidst a filthy rabble—a Catholic who acknowledges that this same Jesus died for him—a Catholic who professes to believe that Jesus is the Son of God—for this Catholic to assail that name, is most uncouth, most abominable, most barbarous ! Think of the monstrous rashness ! A Catholic goes to

confession on Saturday afternoon, receives holy communion on Sunday morning, and on Sunday afternoon contaminates again his tongue and lips by the horrible sin of blasphemy? The very tongue, the very lips which were sanctified in the morning by the touch of Jesus, become ere night the instruments of hell—instruments to hurl insults at their beneficent Saviour! Was it for this He was stripped of His garments? Was it for this that every wound shot its pain into the soul of Jesus? Was it for this He instituted the sacrament of His mercy and hides Himself in the sacrament of His love?

Children often learn this poisonous habit from their parents. The very ones who should excite in their young souls a horror for profanity; the very ones who should instil into the souls of their children a profound respect for everything sacred, swear and blaspheme in an appalling manner. How can they prevent their children imitating them? Indeed, they care not to put a single obstacle in the way to their acquisition of this infamous vice. It is a wonder that such people fear not the just anger of Almighty God; that they fear not that God will send some terrible calamity upon them and teach them reverence by affliction. A devout person is shocked when he hears a Jew or infidel misuse the holy name of Jesus in boastful profanity, but will Catholics unite with those who despise the Redeemer? Will Catholics applaud their base ignorance by doing the same thing? Shame on such Catholics! Shame on those who would join the low herd of men who seek to give strength to their denial of Christ by the lowest vituperation of His sacred name, a name which is revered in heaven, respected in hell, but abused by a pitiable class of so-called Catholics! Moreover, such

profanation bespeaks a heart debased, a soul uncultured, and the boorishness of the defamer. No person who thinks anything of himself would dare to insult His God in this despicable manner. Still some imagine they are not men ; others, that they are not conspicuous enough unless they can display, by the foulness of their mouths, how wretchedly low is their condition. A great achievement of which to boast ; a reproach on the fair name of Catholicity ; a disgrace to mankind, and merciless ingratitude to their benign Saviour !

Why do you not break up this infamous habit ? Why do you not strip yourselves of this blasphemous fault, as a proof of your sympathy for Jesus at this Station of the Cross ? Do you say you cannot ? Do you tell me it has become so imbedded in your nature that you cannot eradicate its roots ? You are not in earnest ; there is no compassion in your hearts for Jesus, Who allowed His garment to be torn off His lacerated body for your salvation. Rise in all the strength of your will and declare before leaving this church to-night, that you will never more wilfully profane the revered name of Jesus. It may be that you cannot at once entirely supplant this venemous practice, for it requires time and resolution. Yet you will have merit in conquering the habit, and your struggle to subdue it will be proof of your loving appreciation for the passion of your meek and benevolent Redeemer.

Now, generally coupled with the habit of swearing is the sin of drunkenness. Wherever one has a residence the other is very sure to be there. Drunkenness, like blasphemy, degrades its victim. Jesus suffered and died to elevate human nature ; he humbled Himself that man may rise by his humiliation. Every lesson He teaches, every example He gives, is for the betterment

of man. Will not Catholics be grateful to Him for so much beneficence and prove their gratitude by their temperance? Will not those of you who are disposed to imbibe too freely divest yourselves of this ruinous habit as an acknowledgment to Jesus for His inexpressible agony at this tenth station of His sorrowful journey? What a glorious triumph it would be for this parish, if you discontinued forevermore the use of intoxicants. The memory of this Lenten season would be forever fraught with recollections of thanksgiving.

Now, if you only reflect upon drunkenness and its baneful effects, you will easily see enough of misery in it to deter the sober from ever indulging and to make the drunkard wish he had never fallen under its demoniacal sway: for it demoralizes the heart, enfeebles the intellect, enslaves the will, and strikes at the image of God in the soul. No will is so strong that it will not demolish, no intellect so brilliant that it will not eclipse, no social or political position so exalted that it will not undermine. There is no home, be it ever so happy, which it will not destroy; no person so sacred that it will not corrupt. What are you then to do? Avoid it, hate it; and if it has taken hold of you, battle to overthrow its enslaving powers.

You may think I am too severe, that I have some grudge against somebody, and long to destroy his business. Permit me to put this grave subject clearly before you. Where is the dealer in such drinks, who, if he had a son, and that son fast becoming a drunken wreck, would not be grateful to me were I to reclaim his son from the debasement of drunkenness? Would he not consider me his friend and the friend of his misguided boy? Would he not rejoice to see his son once more a respectable, sober, peaceful member of his family?

To see that son walking erect in the manliness and beauty of his young life, would be untold joy to the care-worn father and heart-stricken mother. They would not maintain that I am trying to injure their business, or that I am their enemy, because I saved their boy, and by so doing restored happiness to their distracted home. Why then imagine that I entertain the least ill-feeling against anyone when I implore you to beware of drunkenness? Can I not advise and exhort and beseech you without being your enemy or the enemy of anyone else? Why misconstrue my motives? When I intend your good, why declare or suspect that I am planning disaster for you? Do you think I ever allow my own personal feelings to influence my instructions to you? As I gaze in thought at this station upon the bruised and mangled body of Jesus, do you think I would strike Him another blow or inflict upon His poor, weak body another wound by carrying personal enmity, if I had it, into this holy place? By such actions I would be degrading the ministry to which He has called me, though unworthy of such great favor. But though unworthy, I never stooped to take any personal revenge in this sanctuary. God has always protected me without my having recourse to so doubtful a weapon; and I have not yet lost confidence in His protecting hand.

Again, is it not my duty to warn you, to remonstrate with you, and even to chide you on account of your faults? Why am I here? Is it to wink at your excesses and by my silence to accelerate you ruin? Am I to be so extremely sensitive and so fearful of your displeasure, that I dare not admonish you? If that were true, then I would be a poor ambassador of Christ, and your cringing, unfaithful servant. No;

when I warn you against drunkenness or any other evil, I have no motive except duty and your good. And during this holy season you, everyone of you, could not do better than to resolve to shun the demon of intoxication forevermore. Those of you who have never been under the influence or this desolating vice should thank God. Others who, alas! cannot wear upon their souls the badge of such distinguished honor, ought this evening, before departing from this place, make a resolution to strip themselves forever of this degrading habit. Jesus was stripped in preparation for His painful death. Strip yourselves, too, of the craving desire for intoxicants; and, though you may have to suffer a sort of martyrdom in the struggle, you will clothe yourselves with many a virtue and fill your homes with peaceful blessings.

A very bad custom which some parents have is to send their children after the stuff. Into such a place a good parent would not send his children. A lifetime of temptation may render them familiar enough with the haunts of many a snare. They will be familiar soon enough with the abodes of vice and crime. Again, those parents divide with their children—all drink together. They may say they are all very moderate, and this may be all very true. It is not the most pleasant duty to chide families for their little recreations. Yet, are not these children becoming acquainted with the demon which destroys millions; and is it not the parents who are giving them the introduction? You may say you are temperate; but will you always remain so? Can you withdraw the curtain of the future and see whether your children will ever retain the admirable virtue of moderation? You cannot; and besides, the divine injunction upon you is to envelop your children

with every safeguard. Instead of nourishing a habit which may become a cruel master and a devastating fiend, lay the foundations of sobriety. Lay them deep and broad, that no future tempest may tear them from their bed.

Now, my dear friends, if you supplant during this Lenten season these two disgracing vices of blasphemy and drunkenness ; or if you begin to uproot them, and continue faithfully, you will thank God for the blessing of this evening, and the last Lent in this expiring century will be one of grateful remembrance to you. Ask the Blessed Virgin and Saint Joseph and the patron saint of your church to come to your assistance.

ELEVENTH STATION.

Jesus is Nailed to the Cross.

My Dear Brethren: Consider here how the weary, lacerated body of Jesus was stretched out upon the cross. The executioner takes the nails and the hammer. He presses the point of the nail into the palm of the hand, then strikes it a terrible blow. See the blood start forth from the wound; see the muscles and sinews of the body twitch from that awful strain of agony. Blow follows blow, and at every blow what pain centres and quivers in His loving Heart! The cruel nails tear through His sacred flesh. They penetrate not only His hands, but they drive their torture into His soul. Where was His Blessed Mother? Why did she not rush to her Divine Son and strive at least to soothe His great pain by a mother's pity? Why did she not with a mother's tears and a mother's supplication beg them to show some mercy? Ah! she was there, a witness of that appalling scene. She heard the awful blows. She saw the sacred blood burst forth at every stroke. Every nail was a dagger piercing her aching heart. Her efforts to reach her Son were futile. The soldiers forbade her to approach. There was no mercy to be given. He had accepted the bitter Chalice in the garden. He must drink its devouring lees for the salvation of the human race.

What prompted Him to suffer so much anguish? What induced Him to leave heaven, to assume human

nature, and to take upon Himself all the sins of the human race? Ah, it was charity! Charity it was which prompted Him to forsake the celestial court of His heavenly Father! Charity for weak, frail, rebellious, ungrateful man! God created man sufficient to stand, but free to fall, and fall he did; and it demanded the limitless charity of Jesus to redeem him. He saw man in his frailty, in his sorrows, in his joys. In his sorrows He saw him beg for pity and relief; in his joys He saw him unmindful of the needy and the poor; in his frailty He saw him dejected and despairing; and hence He came to preach to man the beautiful and efficacious virtue of charity. He beheld the tyrant and the slave; He beheld wealth and poverty; He beheld every distinction, every oppression, every contention, which divided or will divide the human race into opposing camps; and consequently He left heaven and became incarnate to teach man the heavenly-born precepts of charity.

It is only our purpose on this occasion to ask you to contemplate the second precept: "*Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself*"; nor do we intend to treat this very extensively. Let us glance, nevertheless, at a few things which it suggests, and resolve to profit by them. Let us do this in honor and love of the sacred wounds of Jesus, that His sacred blood may flow through our soul, imparting to us the true spirit of charity for everyone.

Jesus teaches us, by word and example, the broadness of charity. He died for all human creatures. There was no distinction made in regard to literacy or illiteracy, in regard to wisdom or ignorance; nor was there any other distinguishing feature in His boundless principle of charity. Now, as we commemorate His passion and death, should we not imitate His example and obey

His precepts? By obedience we give genuine testimony of our gratitude for His love and mercy. Is He not deserving this gratitude? Has He not merited our homage? Then, let us evince our gratefulness and our reverence with visible evidence of charity.

St. Paul says in reference to this virtue: "*If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as a sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. And if I should have prophecy, and should know all mysteries, and all knowledge; and if I should have all faith, so that I could move mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. If I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing... And now there remain faith, hope, and charity, but the greatest of these is charity.*" (Cor. xiii.) This quotation bestows upon you some notion of the necessity and exaltedness of charity. You may have the hope of a saint and the faith of a martyr; but if you have not charity you are not a disciple of Jesus. From St. Paul it is not difficult to learn that faith alone will not save you, although many have taught, and do yet teach, that all you need to do is to believe in order to be eternally happy with God. Indeed this, the greatest of all virtues, appertains to every human act and should permeate our conduct. All the vexations and disturbing contentions of our day could find solution in Christian charity. Were every one to adhere to this principle in practice, there would be honesty in every department of human endeavor. Labor would be linked to Capital by the bonds of friendship. Acrimony among neighbors would cease, and peace and good will reign over society. Instead of this we hear a great deal about humanity and benevolent assimilation, but behold gigantic plunder. Instead of the supremacy of this kindly

virtue, might rules, and there is little regard paid to the justice or injustice of any act, as long as the civil law can be escaped, or the weak can be conquered by the strong. The absence of charity, therefore, is what makes so much turbulence in society and the shedding of so much blood. Our Divine Lord understood all this ; and consequently on many an occasion inculcated this saving principle of society and promoter of civilization. His Church has always taught the same precept, and how often has not Leo. XIII. appealed to the nations to revere this virtue, the cement of society.

You may inquire : " How is it, if a person gives all his goods to feed the poor, that he has not charity ? What more can a person do ? What else is expected of him ? " These questions suggest as many answers. First, then, you may give to the poor, but give from a human motive. You may desire more in return than you give, or you may be solicitous for applause. Some nowadays leave the hungry starve, while they give large donations for the erection of magnificent libraries. Books are good food for the intellect, but bread is more relished by the hungry. Again, Christian charity has God for its object. Every good deed done, every kind word spoken, must emanate from a heart which wishes thereby to do the will of God. Charity—Christian charity sees in the needy the image of God ; and helps the needy, because they are children of a common Father ; but looks for neither gain nor praise. Besides, you might give all you possess to the poor and still hate others. Your charity, hence, would be only partial. Indeed, you would entertain charity and hate at the same time, and the latter would destroy the merits of the former. Charity, then, you must bear in mind, consists not only in doing good, but also in refraining from the commission of injury.

How admirable is the charity of a great-souled, big-hearted person! He drives out the craving pangs of hunger from the habitations of the poor, and clothes the shivering limbs! With kind words he lightens the cross mortifying the heart of the afflicted. He is an angel in human guise. Jesus looks with tenderness upon him. The world is not all selfishness, and some remember the anguish endured by Jesus at this station of the cross. Such a person's acts are recorded by the hands of angels, and this memory will never be blotted out of the Book of Life. How dark and dismal and cheerless would this world be but for such angels of charity!

Still, you must not only be charitable and kind, but you must not add to the cross of anyone another pang of torture. You would not have the heart or the malice to drive the cruel nails into the hands and feet of your Saviour; nor would you strike His exhausted, mangled body another blow; then do not strike one for whom His hands and feet were pierced. If you have no other motive to restrain you, have mercy on the sufferings of your God. How many a Catholic acts as if he were not a Christian! How many a Catholic is guilty of savagery in this matter, from which a pagan would recoil in pity. The tongues of many Catholics are sharpened as the serpent's fangs, and upon their lips is the poison of the asp. How inconsistent! In the morning they implore God's protection; ere night they wound the hearts of others, and drive the nails deeper into the palms of their Saviour's hands. They assert they are fearless, that they say what they please. They need not attempt to convince us of their boldness; it is stamped upon their faces; but there is a God Who will humble their audacity, and melt by affliction their steel-

clad countenances. Their uncharitableness will bring them nothing but misery. They may defy God, they may glory in the recklessness of their devastating tongues, and proclaim without fear the malice of their filthy hearts ; still, they will only reap in sorrow what they sowed in hatred. What waste of precious time ! What abuse of grace ! How many hearts wounded, and nothing gained except the maledictions of Heaven !

What are the innocent to do about it ? Why, let the defamer and calumniator howl. The more they howl, the better they will be known. They can do an honest person no harm. Indeed, their ravings are the best commendations which any person can obtain from such a class. The fact that they attack you, is a proof you are not allied with such a gang ; and the absence of such alliance is to your honor. They are well known, hence they are powerless. It is only such as themselves who will consider their invectives of any weight. They are like the angered serpent which, failing to destroy the object of its venom, drives its furious fangs deep into itself and perishes by the rancor intended for another.

Now, remember, this second precept of charity teaches that you must love your neighbor as yourself. From this it follows that you must love yourself as well as your neighbor. In all the vicissitudes of fortune, you should protect yourself, defend yourself, do everything consonant with charity for yourself. But you ought not seek revenge. In your heart there should be no malice. You should not destroy yourself by the feverish desire of revenge. Rise above these baneful intentions which smack of hell. Ponder well the broad, forgiving principle of Christian charity. But, you answer : " How can we forgive and forget the burning insults, the

branding wrongs, the sleepless nights, forced upon us without provocation ?" Many, it is true, have suffered from unscrupulous enemies ; still it does not seem to me difficult for you to pardon them. Behold your Divine Saviour being nailed to the cross. See His sacred blood flow for the redemption of all and for the establishment of Christian charity. Standing before this station and meditating upon the boundless love of Jesus, can you refuse to imitate His example ? Can you say you will not forgive ? "But how can we forget," you urge, "all the malignity of our enemies ?" Ah ! this is another thing. You cannot forget. Somehow you may neglect to remember kindness ; but a grievous injury is so deeply graven on the tablets of your memory, that you could not forget, if you were to try. God created you capable to retain and recall the knowledge of past events ; and therefore it is not sinful to recollect the evils done you. Indeed, it is wise to remember them. Not, however, with a purpose of revenge, but as a source of self-protection. It is a part of wisdom and sagacity not to forget the malicious disposition of your enemies, so that you may never again afford them an opportunity to repeat their devilish designs. Prudence declares that there is wisdom in Benjamin Franklin's maxim : "Beware of an enemy reconciled."

Still, should misfortune crush your enemy, should the hand of God press sorely upon him, do not strike him while he lies helpless at your feet ; stoop and lift him up. Show him that a manly heart beats in your bosom ; that you are not impelled by a narrow, rancorous spirit of vengeance. Help him for the immortal image within him ! Help him for the honor of your

Saviour and your God! Bear in mind Byron's lines:

> "The drying up a single tear has more
> Of honest fame than shedding seas of gore."

My advice then would be: take every lawful means for self-defense, but be charitable to a fallen foe.

Then let each one of you love himself. Cultivate the ennobling emotions of your heart; develop its resources; cherish these lofty aspirations worthy of a Catholic. Enlarge your intellect; feed it on the very best. Do every noble thing to bring out the impress of the divinity in your soul. Advance—advance from one state of Christian virtue to another more perfect, becoming at every grade of your progress more and more like unto your God. Let the spark of the divinity within you not smoulder, but let it shine brighter and brighter from year to year. Let it be fed and cherished by the benevolent virtue of Christian charity. Then when you are nailed to your bed of death, may the angels of God cast the shroud of charity about you! May the Blessed Virgin console you! And may her Divine Son whisper to your conscience: "Be of good cheer, My child; all your faults are forgiven, and all on account of your great charity!"

TWELFTH STATION.

Jesus Dies on the Cross.

My Dear Brethren: What a death is this! The marvel of men and of angels! Your Saviour has hung during three long, terrible hours upon the cross. He has heard the jeers and blasphemy of men around Him, and for whom His blood is flowing. Mary, His immaculate Mother, is consigned to the guardianship of St. John. From the lips of sin has gone forth the cry for mercy, and Jesus benignly promises the penitent thief joy in Paradise. As the ninth hour is approaching, Jesus proclaims that all is consummated. His thorn-crowned head sinks on His bosom, and the soul of Jesus is beyond pain. The redemption of the human race is accomplished, but at what a sacrifice! Atrocious barbarity on the one hand, and on the other the keenest sufferings! Ponder well this death; let its history find lodgment in your hearts, that you may the better conceive its great agony and better understand the unstinted love of your Saviour for you. You have meditated during this Lent upon the sorrowful scenes on the way to Calvary. Now behold your Redeemer dying upon the cross. The whole weight of His body is resting on the nails in His hands and feet. Pain is too common a word; suffering too feeble a word; agony too insufficient a word; yea, the tongue powerless to express the extreme anguish of those three awful hours! Feel, then, you must! Feel what cannot find voice to ex-

press! Feel the nails piercing your own hands and feet! Feel the weight of your body hanging on these wounds! And then you will have some conception of the love which prompted Jesus to abandon heaven for your redemption. Ah, were you there, you could not have looked upon that ghastly tragedy! You could not have looked upon the greatest criminal, nor your most implacable enemy, dying in such horrible torments. But Jesus endured more than an ordinary man. His body was tainted by no imperfection. His perfect human body was consequently most delicate and most sensitive to pain. Besides, the horrible load of sin—the crimes of all mankind—was dragging His sacred body down upon the nails, intensifying His anguish. No wonder He cried out in His affliction: "*My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?*"

What a piteous cry! How much it tells your hearts of His desolation! How much it speaks to you of that agony which language is too povertible to describe! His Eternal Father had abandoned Him at the moment He accepted the bitter chalice of man's sins; from that moment the concentrated anger of His Eternal Father was upon Him as the victim of the sins of men. His beloved Son Who was once so grand in the everlasting mansions of heaven, Whose human body was a masterpiece of infinite genius, was now an object of detestation on account of man's sin! Ah, and even to inflict upon His own poor, bleeding, crucified body every element of sorrow, every shaft of grief, every drug of misery, He withdraws from the strength and solace of His own divinity! Hence His boundless charity, desiring to demonstrate every proof of love, reaches the zenith of beneficence.

Now, my Christian friends, you meditated at the tenth

station upon some of the vices of which you should divest yourselves, as a memorial of your gratitude to Jesus, Who was so barbarously stripped of His garments. At the eleventh station your attention was drawn to the nailing of Jesus to the cross, that you may, in commemoration of His agony, attach yourselves, yea, nail yourselves to Christian virtue. Then you contemplated the second precept of charity ; and I hope, resolved, as an act of atonement, to observe its obligations. Let us now at this station consider the first precept of charity : "*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind.*"

See your Saviour dying upon the cross ; see Him deprived of all respect ; see Him shorn of all dignity ; and I ask you, do you not love Him ? His whole life on earth was devoted to the improvement of man: He was kind, gentle, meek, and benevolent. He humbled Himself at His birth for you ; He permitted Himself to be condemed to the ignominous death of the cross, that you may live in grace ; and is He now demanding too much of you when He asks you to love Him ? But, you may say to me : "How can we love Him with our whole heart, with our whole soul, and with all our mind, and with all our strength ? Are we not created for a life of toil ? '*By the sweat of thy brow thou shalt earn thy bread.*' How then can we give all our attention to the love of God ? Must not our mind be also occupied with our pursuits ? Must we not plan, and plan to execute our plans ?" All this, my friends, can be accomplished, and yet love God according to His precept. Jesus would not impose upon you a commandment, the fulfillment of which is impossible. You love God with your whole heart when every emotion, every aspiration, every desire rises to Him as burning incense

from an urn. Every throb of the heart should be for Him. Every wish of the heart should be in conformity with His holy will. You should eradicate from the heart every impulse contrary to His law. You should pluck out every vice, every abject inclination, every propensity to lower yourself from the sphere of divine grace. In all this there is not anything antagonistic to honorable labor and permanent success.

"*Thou must love the Lord thy God with thy whole soul.*" You must love Him, therefore, with your whole life, with that spirit which He created and which is immortal. Every breath which you breathe ought to be an expression of your love for Him, ought to be a co-operation with His eternal plan. Every faculty of the soul must act in accordance with the will of God, if you are to love Him as He prescribes. And how can the soul be more profitably engaged than in energetic compliance with the desire of Heaven? Who is a more skilful guide; who wiser; who more forseeing; who knows better the best means to attain the best ends, than He Whose wisdom fills the heavens and the earth? It is unnecessary to add that when He is your Guide and you are complying with His directions, you are laboring for your own best interests, and at the same time loving Him with your whole soul.

"*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole mind.*" All the intellectual faculties should love Him —the will, the memory, and the understanding. No act of the will must be in violation of any of His commandments. The memory should dwell upon all the blessings received from His bountiful generosity. The understanding should weigh carefully and direct wisely in compliance with His divine injunctions. Nor ought there be, in all the mental operations of human

activity, one act contrary to the will of Heaven ; but every thought should emanate from a mind imbued with the love of God. Why cannot the husbandman offer the sweat of his brow and the fruits of his field to his Creator ? Cannot your endeavors be applied to earthly pursuits and at the same time be an evidence of your love to God ? Is not every human act performed consonantly with the precepts of Christianity, a good act proclaiming the love of the mind for the Saviour of the human soul ? Toil is not pernicious. It is honorable, manly, and necessary ; and, therefore, when performed in accordance with the will of God, becomes holy and meritorious. It is then an expression of love and adoration from the creature to the Creator. The Catholic scientist, as he delves into the natural secrets of things, finds his heart expanding and his intellect marvelling at the wonderful works of God. He cannot but love God with all his mind. Everything teaches him to love God. In everything the beneficence and wisdom of God are discovered, and in the profundity of his admiration the scientist's enthusiasm becomes a prayer of love. Thus it is also with the philosopher and theologian. In all their investigations they behold the hand of God, animating, directing, executing with supreme benevolence ; and their studies and researches are prayers of thanksgiving to Almighty God. In the same manner the painter, the sculptor, the historian, and every other person, in all their labors should permit no opposition to the love of God.

Finally, you should love God with all your strength. All the energies of your body and soul ought to be prayers of love to your Creator. He gave you these powers ; why not love Him with His own gifts and on account of His wonderful munificence ? Such love

dignifies you ; such love destroys the snares of life and banishes the schemes of your enemies. In such love what joy, what admiration, what reward ! The soul becomes unfettered from sin and soars to God in praise, in wonderment at His great works, and in thanksgiving for all His liberality ! The prodigious and enchanting works of creation, elevating and enlarging the scope of a true Christian's contemplation, cannot be duly appreciated by an unbeliever. Even the heart of the savage is enkindled with a peculiar love for the Great Being, as the poet Pope beautifully describes :

> "' Lo ! the poor Indian, whose untutored mind
> Sees God in clouds, or hears Him in the wind ;
> His soul proud science ne'er taught to stray
> Far as the solar walk or Milky Way."

No ; yet, there is a mysterious feeling of awe and reverence for the Supreme Being in the soul of the unlettered inhabitant of the forest. Why not also in the soul of every Catholic ?

Inanimate nature praises the creative power of God. The everlasting mountains and hills, the valleys and the plains, the rains and the dews, the calms and the tempests, the rivulet and the ocean,—all praise His wisdom and His power. The herbs and the plants, the flowers and the foliage, tell of His love and liberality to man. " Will man whom rational we call," not unite his voice with the praises of the angels and the saints, with the earth and the heavens, to proclaim the glory of God ? See the rose, for example. The beauty of its petals and sepals are unspeakable. Whence did they spring ? Whence did they derive their variegated magnificence—this delicate hue, the marvellous blending of beautiful colors ? From the bountifulness of God's abundance. The sustenance comes from the

earth and the atmosphere ; but do you see such beauty in the soil ? Do you behold it in the air ? Whence then does it come ? According to the wisdom and providence of God, the flower is endowed with the almost miraculous ability to paint in a most wondrous manner in its own laboratory, the hues and tints which call forth the admiration of the beholder, while they praise the greatness of God's power. Again, whence comes the perfume, the sweet, pleasing, cheering exhalations with which the flower fills the air ? Can you detect it in the air or earth ? Oh, no ; it is distilled in its own wonderful laboratory with a skill and a genius baffling the science of man ; then, too, the amount of the perfume which the rose emits. Day after day, when it is in the fullness of its glory, it gives forth this delightful fragrance, enriching the air and praising God. Wonderful manifestations of God's goodness and inexhaustible resources ! Thus it is with all nature. Everything declares the glory of God. Will man, the image of his Maker, refuse Him his love ? Will man with all his inscrutable powers decline to thank the Giver ? Will man, created a little less than the angels, endowed with immortality, heir to the kindom of heaven, redeemed by the sacred blood of Jesus, refrain from praising, loving, and serving His greatest Benefactor ?

In the feverish struggle of life, see how you love success and advancement, wealth and comfort, fame and position. For these transitory things health will be sacrificed, friends abandoned, God ignored. Is this reasonable ? Is this honorable ? Is not this rash and in the end unprofitable ? If you love the perishable things of earth, why forget the imperishable ? Let your hearts, therefore, rise to God in prayer ; He is the highest good. You love and admire the works of

genius, then love Him from Whom all genius and all beauty and all glory emanate! The heavens resound with anthems of love to Him; the earth voices His goodness; will you be ingrates? Will you by your want of love for Him, declare the narrowness and insensibility of your hearts, or your ingratitude for His blessings, or the barenness of your souls? No; you repudiate such insinuations; your devotion during this Lenten season repudiates such barrenness of soul; for the most of this congregation have been faithful and edifying in their attendance at every devotion—at every exercise, notwithstanding the inclemency of the weather.

To those who are indifferent and undevotional, I would say, look at your Saviour at this station, dead upon the cross. As He hangs there He entreats you to be mindful of your peace here, and your peace forever hereafter. Might He not say of you, as He said of the Jews: "*Father, forgive them; they know not what they do.* They are wayward, forgetful Catholics—forgetful of the time when in their infancy I purified their souls with My grace. They are unmindful of the grace I bestowed upon them in the Sacrament of Penance, when I pardoned them every insult and replenished their souls with My gifts. They recollect not My love when I fed them with My own Body and Blood. No; Eternal Father, forgive them, they are bad Catholics! They have no emotion of love for Me, their Redeemer! Their hearts are obdurate; they know not what they do!"

Behold your Saviour with pity, as He exclaims from the cross, "*I thirst.*" Thirst for what? What insatiable thirst has parched His lips and lacerated His sacred body? Oh, my friends, this inordinate thirst was for

your salvation, and for mine, and for all mankind. It was this great thirst which induced Him to leave heaven! It was this great thirst which compelled Him to be born in a stable! It was this great thirst which nailed Him to the cross! Look upon the cross and you will learn how great was the love which produced this thirst. Look upon the cross and you will discover the effects of this thirst. See the Centurion take the lance. With precision He strikes the Sacred Heart of your dead Saviour. Blood commingled with water springs forth. The fountain of His love is pierced! Did a single drop fall upon the Centurion? We know not, nor can we say; but He fell upon His knees, exclaiming: "*Truly this is the Son of God.*" The first fruit of His death—the first conversion. What love for such a terrible blow!

Will you and I not avail ourselves of His great mercy? Shall we be sullen and perverse where others sought and found pardon? Will not our hearts respond to the touch of His affection? See the wound made by the lance as if opening an easier access to His Sacred Heart, the last manifestation of His unquenchable love! It entreats you to come to it for hope and for faith and for mercy, because it still loves you. Oh, that wound has a thousand tongues and every tongue proclaims His inexhaustible love and patience for the sinner! O Friend of the human race! O Divine Benefactor of poor, frail, sinful man! In spirit we stand to-night on Calvary's summit and see your lifeless body hanging on its wounds! We see your Sacred Heart laid open by the lance! Permit us to kneel with the Roman soldiers and crave pardon for our ingratitude and for our coldness and for our cruelty to you! In your tender compassion, look benignly upon us. En-

kindle in our cold, forgetful souls the fire of your divine love, that we may ever more love you and have the most affectionate attachment for your Sacred Heart!

THIRTEENTH STATION.

Jesus is Taken Down from the Cross.

My Dear Brethren: The appalling drama of Redemption is ended. Calvary is lonely; all have departed except St. John and the holy women who gathered around the foot of the cross. The tumult has subsided, and Mary, the Mother of Jesus, with breaking heart kneels before the crucified form of her Son. In her anguish does she console herself that the bitter day is closing and that her Divine Son is beyond the malice of His enemies? What pain has torn her heart since the morning began! Jesus suffered crucifixion, but Mary suffered a living martyrdom! He was the Victim of the sacrifice; but she beheld, with a mother's tenderness, that most holy Victim slain by the cruel rabble, and was powerless to restrain ferocity or assuage the agony of the Victim!

A few devoted friends take Him down from the blood-stained altar of sacrifice. They place Him in the arms of His mother. She looks upon the face of the dead—suffering and pity and mercy and love are impressed upon His countenance. He left her in the strength and perfection of His sacred manhood, to die for man; He is given back to her, disfigured, bleeding, and crucified. Who can estimate the sorrows and the shafts of pain piercing, on that Good Friday, the hearts of the Mother and the Son? Who can weigh the love of both for the human race? There is no standard for

that measurement, except the standard of anguish ; and love outweighed the anguish. Then how great is that love! It is beyond all computation! The suffering was the extreme of anguish ; the love was the extreme of affection ?

Ah ! was Mary glad her Son was dead ? Glad they could not torture Him any longer ? As she looked into His pale, dead face, did her sighs and tears tell of relief as well as of compassion ? Surely she must have found consolation in the knowledge that her Son was now far above their vengeance and their malice. The words of holy Simeon have been more than once verified since Jesus accepted the bitter Chalice in the Garden. A sword of grief smote her heart, and rankled and festered there. Her Son is now in her arms. How she adjusts the dishevelled hair ! How she trys to wipe away the blood stains from His bruised forehead ! She trys to soothe the Dead with her caresses ! There is solace and relief in having Him in her arms, though He is mangled and dead. He thought of her in all His agony. When pain was the most intense, He placed her in the care of His beloved apostle, Saint John. Through her sobs she heard the words : "*Mother, behold thy son ; son, behold thy mother.*"

It seems to me most befitting to devote the meditation, at this Thirteenth Station, to Mary, the Mother of Jesus, and the spiritual mother of the human race. Oh, how can Protestants who love Jesus and praise His mercies and extol His love, not esteem the Blessed Virgin, His Mother ! Can they look upon Mary on Calvary's height, in all her desolation, in her tears, in her anguish, and not go to her and compassionate her ? Can they see her face moulded by the agonizing hand of sorrow and not pity her ? Will they not go to her

and wipe away those tears and console that aching heart? Ah! we believe they would, if they would only pause to contemplate her grief. Protestants have hearts. Many of them are kind and sympathetic; and we believe they would solace anguish wherever they could. You ask me now: "Why don't they sympathize with the Mother of Jesus?" My answer is: They do not think. Wrong notions have seized them. They have been taught to despise Mary; and they have never stopped to consider why this despicable teaching was imparted to their young hearts. Convince our dissenting friends of Mary's meekness, of her love for the human race, of her suffering; convince them of the reasonableness of Catholic devotion to her, and they will kneel to supplicate her pardon for all their harshness and beg her Son to forgive their cruel treatment of His Mother. When Jesus remembered her in His great agony, giving her into the care of His most beloved apostle, can any Christian be unmindful of her or disrespect the Mother of their Saviour? No thoughtful, pious Protestant can reject Mary and at the same time love her Son. Prejudice clouds the understanding, poisons the affectionate, grateful fountains of the heart, and makes Christians oppose Christian truths; but dissipate these clouds; destroy or annul the effects of this poison; and Protestants will kneel with Catholics to honor Mary. Anything else is inconsistent with the religion which they profess; anything else is in opposition to the goodness of their hearts; anything else is contrary to their well known common sense.

The Blessed Virgin is inseparably connected with the history of Christianity. She is the Mother of the Redeemer. She was with Him from the manger to Calvary. She wept at the foot of the cross and saw His

life s blood ebb from His sacred wounds ; and since that moment until the present she has been with the Church established by her Divine Son, and there she will ever remain, respected, loved, and venerated. He gave her to Christianity when He bestowed her upon the Apostle St. John. Since the daybreak of Christianity she has been the Queen and Mother of Christians. In every age Catholics have invoked her intercession. In all the dangers which threatened and broke upon the Church, in all the tempestuous disturbances of Society, she has been the guardian angel of Christianity. Her mediation and assistance have been acknowledged time and again by the Church.

In the year 1571, on the seventh of October, when the Turks, exulting over their bloody slaughter of Christians in the Island of Cyprus, gathered their vast fleet in the Gulf of Lepanto, Christendom was agitated to its depths by fear. Prayers ascended to the throne of God, entreating aid. Throughout the Catholic world millions implored the Queen of Heaven to intercede for the Christian squadron, to bear their supplications to her Son, and to ask for the Christian arms His blessings and His help. This naval battle upon which so much depended lasted during five terrible hours. Bravely did the Christians withstand the terrific attacks of the Turks. Hour followed hour in this deadly conflict, the sturdy, barbarous Turk determined that the Crescent should triumph over the Cross. How many a fervent appeal rose from the Christian warriors and their parents and their children during those five long hours of crimson struggle ! At last the Turkish commander was slain and victory once more entwined her laurels around the Cross. The Turks lost twenty-five thousand men in this famous battle of Lepanto and

ten thousand of their army were taken prisoners of war. In gratitude for this great victory Pope Pius V. decreed that the feast of the Holy Rosary should be annually solemnized on the first Sunday of October; and to the Litany of the Blessed Virgin added the invocation: "*Auxilium Christianorum, ora pro nobis,*—Help of Christians, pray for us." From innumerable Catholic hearts went forth offerings of thanksgiving for this memorable victory; and how many a troubled soul has said since then: Help of Christians, pray for me!

Among the many celebrated achievements accomplished by the intercession of the Queen of Heaven, we shall notice only another one. More than a century after the renowned victory of Lepanto, the Turks besieged the City of Vienna with an army of three hundred thousand men. The Sultan of Turkey once again vowed he would feed his horse upon the altar of St. Peter's in Rome. The whole army under Duke Charles amounted to only forty thousand warriors. The city was garrisoned by ten thousand troops. During forty days this little band repulsed every assault of the invader. Women and children joined in defending the city, and all resolved to conquer or perish. Perished they would have, did not Pope Innocent XI. induce the famous Polish chieftain, John Sobrieski, to hurry to the rescue of Vienna. After forced marches for weeks, he approached the scene of this unequal conflict. The garrison was exhausted. Half of its number had fallen, and every hope was rapidly expiring in its bosom, when rockets fired from the heights of Cayenberg told the weary defenders that John Sobrieski had arrived. His small army of twenty thousand men he united with the forty thousand

troops under Duke Charles. The battle began after the Polish warrior had heard Mass, which he served himself. What were his ardent prayers on that eventful September morning in the year 1683? How he besought the God of battles to look propitiously upon his little band; and invoked the prayers of Mary, that the Turk would not trample upon the Cross, the emblem of her Son's victory over sin! Many and many were the invocations from Catholic hearts during that long siege. Prayers were offered by Catholics in every land to the Queen of Heaven and to her Divine Son for the deliverance of the city from the horrors of invasion. The battle continued until five o'clock in the afternoon, when the Turkish army broke and fled. When entering the city, the Polish hero was greeted by all as a messenger from heaven. The people, shedding tears of joy, knelt as he passed by. Mothers held their babies in their arms to see the warrior. "It is God Who has done all," said this celebrated leader, to the multitudes who crowded around him.

Now, what was this hero's act after entering Vienna in triumph? Mark the contrast between great Catholic generals and those who engage in war as a means of promotion and human glory. Why, this distinguished hero entered an Augustinian church and returned thanks to God and the Blessed Virgin for the glorious results of the day. In perpetual memory of this victory, Pope Innocent XI. dedicated the Sunday in the octave of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin as the feast of her august name. These are two of the victories obtained through the prayers of the Queen of Heaven; but how many an unknown and unrecorded triumph has been gained by the Catholic heart through the prayers of the Mother of Jesus?

She has been with the standard of Christianity since that memorable Good Friday, when Jesus hallowed it by His sacred blood. In peace and in turbulence she has not abandoned that insignia of salvation. This is natural, this is reasonable. Being the mother of Him Who loves man exceedingly, it would be strange and contradictory were she not interested in everything which promotes Christianity and enhances the glory of her Divine Son. She has ever been with the Church guiding its deliberations, just as she was with the Apostles in their councils after the Ascension of Jesus to His Eternal Father. In the amphitheatre at Rome where Christian blood consecrated the Eternal City to Almighty God, Mary was present, soothing torture and stimulating hope. She was in the prisons of Rome as well as in St. Peter's and the Vatican. She has visited the homes of poverty as well as the palaces of saintly Catholics. In the abodes of distress she alleviated wretchedness, and in the cells of monks and nuns she assisted virtue and expelled temptations. She has been the faithful and inspiring companion of the priesthood in all the storms of social disturbances and in all the civil and political upheavals. In the wild and untrodden forests of the New World, in Japan, in China, in every uncivilized and savage land she nourished hope and constancy in the troubled hearts of missionary priests. Popes have knelt in supplication to her, so has the beggar. Scholars have offered to her the first fruits of their genius as an act of love to her and as an act of adoration to Jesus. The illiterate have prayed to her; nor were their entreaties discarded because of their illiteracy. The savage of the wilderness has venerated her; nor did the most illustrious of the civilized world consider her badge otherwise than a token of esteem

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and knighthood. The saint poured out his heart in thanksgiving to her ; and she caressed the sinner while she discoursed to his heart upon the mercies of her Divine Son. She has been in the councils of the Church ; she has been with the Fathers and Doctors of the Church in their studies ; she has been the joy of the saint and the hope of the sinner. When the angels sang out on the first Christmas morning : "*Glory to God in the highest,*" she knelt at the manger of Christianity ; she was buried in grief when the Redemption was accomplished ; she saw the rise and early development of her Son's Church ; and she will remain with that Church until the stars fall from the heavens and there is no longer a tenant of the earth !

In all this devotion toward the Queen of Heaven, there is no diminution of the homage due to God. He is the Father of all, and the supreme Ruler of the heavens and the earth and of all things known or unknown to the human intellect. She is simply our intercessor. When God is angry with us on account of our transgressions ; or when we are anxious for the prayers of some great citizen of heaven, we turn to Mary and beseech her to represent us at the throne of mercy. At the marriage feast of Cana, the servants besought the aid of Mary. She only suggested to her Son the embarrassment which had fallen upon the feast on account of the want of wine. Her wish was gratified by a miracle—water was changed into wine.

Her veneration in the Catholic Church is a perpetual witness of the establishment of Christianity; is a witness of the birth of Jesus ; is a witness of the Redemption of man. Those foolish people who oppose her veneration and exile her presence from the memory of man, are attempting to batter down one of the great fortresses

of Christianity; and are uniting with the skeptic and the infidel, to banish from the earth every token of esteem for the Blessed Virgin and thereby the memory of Jesus Himself. Repel the Mother, and the love for the Son perishes. Love the Mother, and your love for the Son increases. In these days of skepticism and infidelity, every heart should venerate Mary that the memory of her Son may not fail on the earth, but grow stronger and stronger. The one is inseparable from the Other. Love the one and you love the Other. Hate the one and you cannot long adore the Other. And Thou, our Crucified Redeemer, as we behold in spirit Thy friends taking Thee down from the blood-stained cross and placing Thee in the arms of sorrow, we implore Thee to give us always a loving veneration for Thy Blessed Mother; and thou, O Queen of the afflicted, O Help of Christians, pray for us that we may ever have a friend in Jesus, thy beloved Son!

FOURTEENTH STATION.

Jesus is Laid in the Sepulchre.

My Dear Friends : Jesus is buried. His sacred body is at last laid to rest. No visible pomp accompanies the funeral. No splendid equipage follows the lifeless body of our Saviour to the tomb. No regal retinue, no glare of splendor, no national mourning attends His obsequies. His burial corresponds to His birth. A stable greeted Him at His entrance into human life. A manger was His cradle, a cross is His death couch. Lonely and sadly His few faithful friends bear His sacred remains to the sepulchre. Affectionately they lay Him there, while angels take up their positions as guards of honor.

But while these mournful rites were being performed, Heaven rejoiced and Limbo rejoiced. What must have been the joy in Limbo as Jesus, the Redeemer and Liberator, appeared to the captives therein imprisoned ! Their expectations were realized, their sighs were forever hushed, their moans were converted into prayers of gratitude. Jesus was in their midst and His presence was the guaranty of their releasement. The shackles of sin were broken, the crime in the Garden was absolved, and the Divine Liberator announced to them tidings which they had long desired to hear. How abject His death ! How glorious its effects !

Yes, how abject was His death ; and, yet, how compatible with the design. The infidel may sneer at

such a death and by His scoffing seek to discredit the divinity of Christ. He may say it does not become a Divine Person to die on the cross. He may condemn the barbarity of the execution; but he employs this barbarity as an argument against the divinity of the Redeemer. He may sympathize with the suffering Saviour; still he uses this suffering as a sign of weakness and unbecoming the Son of God. The infidel can tear down; or, at least, make incessant attempts to tear down; but let him try to build up. Let him suggest some other death more comportable to the Saviour of mankind. He cannot; for had our Redeemer died surrounded by royalty; had the panegyrics of the princes of oratory been pronounced at His obsequies; had everything been done which administers to human greatness, which multiplies human merits, and which tends to immortalize human memories, still all these things would have failed to accomplish the results of the crucifixion. One would be a human design, the other is divine; and the divine purpose draws millions to the foot of the cross, while the human would have long ago perished from the contagion of decay.

Jesus is the Great Liberator; and the design which He employed, none but a Divine Person could conceive or execute. He is the Great Liberator Who struck the shackles not only from the limbs of the human race, but also crushed the despotism of hell. Distinguished men have, at certain epochs, devoted their talents, genius, and lifetime to the amelioration of the bondmen of nations. Those were men of rare powers and shining virtues. Posterity honors them for the self-sacrificing part they took in the advancement of civilization. Still, where did these get their inspiration? What spurred them to battle for the slave

and the oppressed ? What encouraged them in opposition and dismay ? Was it not from Jesus on the cross they drew their inspirations ? Was it not His bleeding heart which impelled them to do battle for the bondmen ? Did not His triumph over the ignominy of Calvary infuse into their souls resolution and persistency ? The blessings of Heaven rendered venerable their old age, the slave knelt in prayer for his benefactors, but Jesus was their Eternal Teacher and Model.

Had the Divine Liberator espoused a design of some proud scion of infidelity or atheism, the heroes of Christian civilization would never have wiped a tear from the sorrowing eye of grief ; nor pity the blood-stained stripes upon the back of the slave ; nor wrestled, in continuous struggle, with the slave-master and the despot. There would be no Christian heroes, for there would be no manger and no cross. Clothe our Redeemer in the robes of royalty, place a crown of gold and diamonds upon His head, make Him the greatest of all great human rulers, and the magnetism of His name, the influence of His teachings, and the transmission of His memory perish. Had He even ruled with legions of angels, His triumph would not be so glorious. Indeed, were He to govern in this manner, it would be incumbent upon Him to keep constantly on earth a standing army of the heavenly hosts ; because the moment they were withdrawn, mankind would rebel. Power was not to conquer. Power could not conquer the human race. Meekness and humility and love are the influences best adapted to evangelize and civilize man. These the Great Liberator employed. No other birth than that in the stable, no other death than that on Calvary, could have such imperishable potency. The crown of thorns on the bleeding brow of Jesus, is

more attractive to the human heart than any other crown could be ; the mangled body, more impressive than the most royal robes ; the five wounds, more instructive, more influential, than all the regal decrees of every nation in every age.

In His birth the Divine Liberator humiliated Himself to the lowest abjection. In manhood He taught principles, without which no civilization is possible. On the cross He gives an exhaustless proof of His love for poor, frail man. By these means His memory is welded with the existence of the human race. By these means He rules the human heart. His beneficent sway is more potent than any which opulence, human power, or angelic armies could have acquired. His was a divine design, and this design is still effectual in the liberation of countless millions. At His departure from earth He entrusted the promulgation of His principles to twelve humble men,—weak instruments to convert opulent, sinful nations. What human intellect could have calculated the amazing results which have followed, and which will follow until that same Liberator appears to judge the living and the dead? His doctrine has civilized man. It teaches that no human being should be a slave ; that man should be a brother to his fellow man ; that no tyrant should trample upon the rights of any person. He it was who introduced, and by His Church accomplished, everything which elevates, harmonizes, and improves the race of man.

But He is more than a liberator. To strike the fetters off the bondman is a noble act. To dispel the the bondage of sin is a divine act. He did all this, but He did more. He has built asylums in every land : hospitals for the infirm, homes for the orphan and the

aged, abodes for the helpless and the outcast. He not only liberated, but He has, with a benign father's care, watched over the human race. Aristotle is praised for His learning, Socrates for His humane disposition, Solon as a legislator, men in every age for their philanthropy ; but which of all these has served man with the fidelity, with the charity, with the love with which Jesus has ever manifested toward mankind ? None of these ; for they all were human and exerted only a human influence. He is divine, and consequently His influence is eternal. Moreover, if great men have done great things in Christian times, it was His example which impelled and sustained them. How various is His attractive power ! The child in its innocence kneels, and with clasped hands and a fervent heart returns its gratitude. The penitent prostrates himself after confession and exhausts the emotions of his heart in thanksgiving. The weak look to Him for support ; the strong, for protection ; the outcast, for mercy ; the dying, for pardon !

Did Pontius Pilate ever imagine that Jesus, Whom he condemned to death, would exert such power over the human heart and human intellect ? Did Caiphas ever dream that Christ, Whom He ridiculed, would be honored and adored by innumerable millions ? Did Herod ever think that Jesus, Whom he mocked and distained, would judge him, and from that judgment no appeal would be allowed ? No ; these thoughts never glimmered in their souls. And who, without divine assistance, could predict anything extraordinary for the Redeemer ? Who could, without heavenly enlightenment, as he gazed upon the small, sad group bearing the lifeless body of Jesus to the tomb, presage anything of importance for Him Who was just taken down from

the cross. Yet, in this very weakness and abandonment is His strength. From these, as from perennial fountains, spring forth all the grand achievements of Christianity. All illustrious Christian erudition and all noble Christian charity were born at the foot of the cross. Divine was the design and affectionate the purpose for which Jesus descended from the throne of His Heavenly Father. He is the true Liberator Who has lifted up poor, weak, human nature ; Who has stabilitated society ; Who taught principles which are the embodiment of all wisdom ; and without which the individual, the family, or the nation cannot ascend to greatness.

My Christian friends, you have meditated during this holy time of Lent upon the passion and death and affection of your Redeemer. To-night, as the magnificent feast of Easter approaches, you have knelt in spirit at the Sepulchre. You have compassioned your Saviour. With hearts burning with gratitude, you have thanked Him a thousand times for all His mercy, for all His love. May it be your happiness to remain always faithful to Him ! May you ever draw consolation and grace from Him through the Sacrament of Penance ! May your souls be constantly replenished and fortified by Jesus Himself in the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist ; and may you have the joy of kneeling at His eternal throne and receiving His blessing !

THE LORD'S PRAYER.—FIRST SERMON.

Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name.

My Dear Brethren: Most people devote considerable time in learning how to speak well. As children, they study grammar to acquire accuracy in vocal expression. In more advanced age many give themselves to the study of rhetoric for the purpose of embellishing their discourse. Every part of the masterpieces in prose and poetry is analyzed; the various styles of discourse are considered; and the different elements thereof are distinguished and weighed. Science, art, and literature are explored for gems of thought. For what end? To give substance, polish, and eloquence to speech; to realize the magic and the reward of oratory. For this purpose every effort is made to acquire proficiency in language, and no labor is considered too arduous by the aspirant to such laurels. No one becomes perfect, yet many acquire much ability in this pursuit. Still, while millions toil to speak fluently, how few they are who strive to pray well. Very little effort is made to ponder upon the many sacred thoughts contained in every prayer. The whole day is employed in strenuous activity; but the few minutes devoted to prayer are often passed in drowsiness, inattention, and distractions. You well know what attention and fervor should voice the sentiments of the heart in prayer. Besides, reflection upon the many exalting and instructive suggestions con-

tained therein, should not be lacking. Let us, then, this morning meditate upon the first petition in the Lord's Prayer. Let us analyze, at least in a small degree, this beautiful prayer and dwell upon some of its teachings.

In considering this subject, it may be appropriate to say to you, that you ought to ask God for the spirit of prayer, for the love of prayer. You should entreat Him to teach you how to pray as the disciples asked Him: "*Lord, teach us to pray as John also taught his disciples.*" (St. Luke xi.—1.) The disciples had beheld Jesus pray. They noticed, no doubt, His fervor, the rapt expression on His holy countenance, the calm earnestness with which He addressed His Eternal Father; and contrasting their own inadequacy with the sublimity of His appearance, they invoked Him to teach them to pray. Imitate the disciples. Ask Jesus to teach you, to impart to you the grace necessary for earnest, humble, confiding prayer. Through the grace of God every one can have a temple in his own bosom—his heart the altar, his prayers the sacrifice, and himself the priest. How grand a temple is this—the temple of the Holy Ghost! How perfect the altar—the human heart fashioned by the Eternal Architect! How noble the sacrifice—prayer, the holy emanations of a soul to its Creator! With these reflections, let us consider the first part of the Lord's Prayer.

Our Father, who art in heaven! What a sublime expression! How supreme the object addressed! An acknowledgment of God, a confession of our faith! Who taught you this comprehensive prayer? Jesus Himself. He exhorts you, when you pray, to say: Our Father, who art in heaven! Jesus thus

teaches us that His Eternal Father is our Father also. We no slaves, He no tyrant ; but our Father ! What a joyful relationship ! and as natural as joyful ; for He created us. He breathed into the moulded clay the spark of divinity, and man was made to His image and likeness ; was created with all the wonderful faculties of soul and functions of body,—created a little less than the angels. Beneficent Father ! Dignified children ! With what gratitude we should say : Our Father, Who art in heaven !

The sublimity of the Lord's Prayer arises from the divinity of its Author ; its efficacy springs from the goodness of God and the devoutness of the petitioner ; its usefulness consists in the establishment of the brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God. No prayer is more charitable, none more comprehensive, none more instructive, than this which emanated from Uncreated Wisdom. This sublime prayer draws us near to our Eternal Father. The soul breaking through its narrow confines, seeks the Father of mercies. In the deep aspirations awakened by this prayer, the soul exhausts its gratitude for the inestimable privilege of being able to call the Father of Heaven its Father. And while pouring out its thankfulness, it forgets not to pray for the infirm, the frail, the tempted, and the fallen. The Our Father embraces all mankind. By this prayer man becomes a brother to his fellow man ; and all acknowledge God as their Father !

But the agnostic says : " Give me proof that He is your Father." The infidel declares : " I disbelieve He is your Father." The atheist proclaims : " I deny He is your Father." The agnostic wants proofs of God's existence and providence ; the infidel disbelieves in His existence ; while the atheist avows there is no

God. Everyone of these classes, in his own way, denies there is a God. They say: "Let us tear ourselves away from this notion! It hampers us in our investigations! We want to be independent thinkers, unrestrained, unfettered! Let us rend asunder the ties of religion! It chains the intellect to superstition! It is a clumsy anchor to which Christians and especially Catholics are irredeemably moored. It impedes progress by fettering man's intellect; it enslaves man's will by its tyrannical enactments; it produces ignorance by preaching piety. No; we must delve into the secrets of nature! We must soar to the utmost star and grasp its knowledge! We must be progressive. Away then with all barriers! We are free! We lead the ages!" These are the heroic proclamations of those who have little faith or no faith at all. But are they true?

By professing God to be our Father, are we thereby enslaved? If they mean that we are prevented from stealing, blasphemy, lewdness, wrecking banks, plundering public credit, treason, and every other violation of God's commandments, then I agree with them that we are slaves; but it is from the basis of such slavery that honesty is promoted, families are protected, licentiousness dispelled, government sustained, and the arts, literature, and science encouraged! Jesus, who taught us this prayer, wished not to shackle the legitimate use of intellectual powers. It is true He desired to restrain us, but His restraint is our gain. He purposed to protect us from those destructive influences which blind the intellect and impede all great mental effort. For them to say that our Eternal Father restricts us in the many spheres of intellectual effort, is absurd. The unbeliever, in his zeal to frustrate motives of religion and declare his own stupendous powers, attacks religion and the God of all knowledge.

Let us examine a little to see whether Almighty God is antagonistic to mental development and to the acquisition of knowledge. Mark how He has imbedded the secrets of nature in the world. He did not lay them open to man's first attempts; but revealed them, by degrees, to his energies; always giving enough to compensate arduous toil; tempting man to study, to investigate, to analyze, to classify; bestowing rewards for studious research: the reward of joy over discovery; the reward of his fellow man's praise; the reward of the plaudits of unborn generations! Where was there ever a more successful Teacher? Where was wisdom ever more discernible in the Teacher? Leading on the diligent, patient investigator from one triumph to another, how wisely our Heavenly Father has arranged the endless book of nature to entice the mind of man, to engage him in useful pursuits, to develop his powers of body and soul! In this book we behold the products of unlimited resources and evidences of God! Yea, were the atheist to reflect and examine, He would exclaim with us: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name!

These self-declared leaders of thought, who imagine they alone are progressive and that religion militates against progress, should remember that among the most advanced thinkers of our age, many Catholics stand foremost in the ranks. Who are more celebrated in the theories of evolution and microbiology than that brilliant galaxy of scholars nurtured at Louvain? In archæology, who are more renowned than those distinguished Catholic scientists of Italy and France? In astronomy, who is more illustrious than Father Secchi? In medicine, who excels Pasteur? In our own country, who are they who equal in eloquence

and law the many Catholics who have even won the laurels of praise from their opponents ? In science and invention, Father Zahm and his brother are not inferior to others in the same field. In great and permanent social, civil, and religious progress the Catholic Clergy have no superiors in this broad land. I shall not mention such celebrated scholars as Gilmary Shea, or Brownson, or Archbishop Hughes, or England, or the Kendricks. No ; these have departed to the realms of perpetual reward, with the bays of many an intellectual victory adorning their brows. There are, however, many another great scholar living in this country, who is the superior, in every branch of knowledge, to these boastful unbelievers. Among the distinguished living, permit me to mention that intellectual prodigy, Father Lambert. In philosophy, in theology, in the vast scope of his comprehensive genius, what agnostic, what infidel, what atheist, is his equal ?

These and other Catholics penetrated into the depths of the secrets of nature. Their speculations embraced not only the most remote stars and nebulæ, but even the Throne of. God Their analyses are as minute, their diligence as great, their comprehension as powerful, their reason as cogent, their genius as masterly, as any who are not Catholics nor Christians. Nevertheless, after laurels have been won, after their prodigious exploits are lauded by admiring scholars, they turned their thoughts to God and prayed : Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name ; Thy kingdom come ; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven !

Hallowed be Thy name ! that sacred name, that name of Father and of God ! We hallow that name, and why ? Because He is our Father ; because He is

our God ; because He is goodness itself ! The mountains and the vales praise Him ; the forests and the plains bespeak His greatness ; the merest insect manifests His wisdom. Will, then, man alone, a rational creature, refuse to Him what all else abundantly bestow ? Let agnostics clamor, let atheists rant ; but every good Catholic will hallow that sacred name, will appreciate the endearment of Father, will strive to be an obedient child ; and both in the calm and tumult of his soul, will offer his homage to his God, while he says : Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name.

SECOND SERMON.

Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

My Dear Brethren : In these petitions you pray that God may reign in your hearts and that you may conform all your actions to His divine will. You have studied the world and yourselves, and you are disgusted with the ways of both. You are, tired of seeing the counterfeit pass for the real ; and the real scorned while the counterfeit is prized. Might rules, though wielded by a tyrant ; the weak oppressed, the poor despised, and the rogue crowned. You are moreover, dissatisfied with yourselves, as you manifest by your prayer. You confess your frailty ; and pray God to come into your hearts, that the kingdom of His grace may forevermore abide with you, and that by the aid of this grace you may do His will in all things. Besides, you pray that His kingdom may reside in every soul, that the truce of God may remain permanently on the earth, that every person may direct his highest ambition to the service of his Creator. This is your prayer, this your ardent desire ; but its complete realization is impossible so long as man retains his present inherent characteristics. Yet, though the acme of Christian excellence cannot be attained except by a few, every Christian can strive to reach perfection just as a pilot of a vessel struggles amidst the storm to make his destined harbor.

As a pilot needs a compass to guide him, so does

man need religion. Without this he will inevitably suffer spiritual, and very probably physical, shipwreck. But the substance and the vitality of the Christian religion is contained in these two comprehensive petitions. Were God to reign in the heart of every human creature; were every human creature to do the will of God in all things,—the consummation of Christianity would be attained. Yet, if perfection cannot be acquired, let everyone be as perfect as he can. Though God's grace does not completely enrich the soul, it does not follow that such a soul is marred by grievous sins. On the contrary, it may rejoice in the friendship of God; may make strenuous efforts to become, day by day, more of a loving child of its Creator; and with earnest, dutiful, ardent aspirations often pray: Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven!

Religion is the heavenly wrought chain which binds us to Almighty God; by means of which divine grace is communicated to the soul; by means of which our appeals find an audience in heaven; by means of which the kingdom of God rules in our souls. In early age, it beautifies the child; in youth, it imparts vigor and direction; in middle life, solace, strength, and endurance; in the declining evening of old age, constancy, gratitude, and hope. It solves the riddle of human existence, explains the miseries of man, bestows upon man an Eternal Father, glorifies God, and makes human life desirable. Without religion society becomes chaotic; nations decay and civilization disappears. La Place verifies this by his experience: "I have lived long enough," he says, "to know what I did not at one time believe—that no society can be upheld in happiness and honor without the sentiment of religion." And that astute thinker, Edmund Burke, declares that:

"True religion is the foundation of society When that is once shaken by contempt, the whole fabric cannot be stable or lasting."

What does the atheist propose to give us instead of the kingdom of God's grace? What, likewise, do those who would teach morality without religion, presume to secure for us? Such destructive doctrine robs man of peace, destroys the security of life and property, undermines the pillars of state, encourages self-destruction, and gives nothing in compensation except vain boasting and bottomless theories. Banish the respect which honest Christians possess for the will of God; exile God from the human heart,—and man will sink into barbarism—civilized barbarism which destroys without mercy, while it displays some polish. The history of nations demonstrates this truth. Whenever a Christian nation has, in its pride and advancement, ignored God, it was humbled. It was humbled, like the king of old, until it acknowledged the supremacy of heaven. The estrangement of religion from the minds of men, and especially from the minds of children, is bearing fruit which is poisoning the sources whence healthy, enduring society draws its sustenance.

"The white man's burden" of the age is religious indifference and moral corruption. The venality of statesmen, the dishonesty of public officials, the prostitution of justice, are sufficient to appall the virtuous patriot and the righteous Christian. Many parents heed not the tendencies of the present generation. They are not animated by Christian principles, and consequently care not for the religious training of their children. The overweening purpose of their existence appears to be their material prosperity; and

the desirable goal for their children is positions of profit and influence. They educate their children not for God, but for the glorious privilege of being rascals without detection, perjurers without punishment, and adulterers without shame. They little consider that an education without God is destructive of the best interests of their children and the virtue and stability of the state. The patriot who studies to discover the best means of enhancing the public good and transmitting the noble legacy of a great government to posterity, will ever maintain that God should rule in the affairs of man, that the kingdom of His grace should reign in the soul of everyone, and that the most solemn duty of every citizen is to accomplish the will of God.

Were all to adore the Eternal Father of the heavens and the earth; were all to hallow His holy name,—then, indeed, He would reign in their hearts ; then, indeed, His kingdom would have already come. He would reign in our souls, bringing the peace of heaven with Him. Then our intellects would be illumined by His divine presence ; then we would see God more clearly in every part of His creation, and man would be nearer a brother to his fellow man. Parents would be solicitous to train their children to serve, love, and obey God. Statesmen's highest ambition would be to perform their duties in conformity with the will of heaven. All would have, as the great motive of their conduct, the love and the fear of God.

Yea, were we to do His will here on earth as the blessed do it in heaven, what tranquillity would permeate society ; what security would be obtained for the nation ; what grace would embellish our souls ! The peace of the angels would be in our hearts, and much

of the happiness too. To do His will! What more noble pursuit; what progress so beneficial; what aims more sublime! The efforts of great genius should be toward perfection, but God is perfection itself. To do His will is only a compliance with the rules of perfection. It is the fear of God, or rather the love of God; for this delicate fear, this supernatural fear, springs from the heart of love;—we fear most to offend Him Whom we love most.

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven! This is a beautiful ejaculation which every Catholic should often repeat, to the realization of which every Catholic should aspire. Nay, were all to live in conformity with His will, dishonesty would cease, immorality would be banished from the hearts of men, crime would need no jails, drunkenness would necessitate no reformation; joy would prevail in many a family where wretchedness now resides; sorrow, arising from misfortune, would be robbed of its rankling shafts; suicide would be unknown; divorce would be detested; faith, hope, and charity would triumph!

Those skeptics who mock at Catholic devotion and clamor that God and religion are enemies of progress, should beware. Their principles disturb society, break down the barriers against vice, directly or indirectly nourish corruption, sow the seeds of anarchy, and generate revolutions. They fancy they are the leaders of scientific thought. Every discovery or invention must be attributed to them. Without them there would be no progress; yea, but their progress is retrogression and ruin! It is opposed to advancement, it promotes divorce, it plunders the sanctuary of family happiness! By maintaining that morality is born of evolution, that man's goodness or wickedness depends entirely upon

evolved culture, they strike at the providence of God, and attempt the annihilation of eternal principles, without which the individual, the family, and the nation must decay. Such science, if science it can be called, breeds excesses. Those excesses generate fumes which settle down upon the observatories of the intellect, impeding the intellectual vision, enervating mental activity, poisoning the fountain sources of massive thought and majestic emotion!

Let us, my friends, continue to draw our principles of morality from the unadulterated springs which emanate from the throne of God. According to these rules, saints have been made, martyrs have died, scholars have flourished, and the Church of God has triumphed. God's will should be our will. We should labor to comply with His eternal decrees; and, as far as it is prudent, encourage others to do likewise. To correspond to His laws is wisdom, is progress, is peace. In order that we may have strength to combat the evil tendencies of our age, let us often say: "Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven!"

THIRD SERMON.

Give us this day our daily bread.

My Dear Brethren: On previous occasions we considered the first part, as it may be called, of the Lord's Prayer. You meditated upon its sublimity, as unquestionably you had often done before. You drew inspiration from its invocations. You rejoiced that God is your Father. This short prayer is a chain of the rarest pearls of sublimest thought. It springs from the Divinity of God, has its source in the beneficence of His Divine Son. Its efficiency is certain, its fruitfulness abundant, its appropriateness unequaled, its appeals commendable; for it was first taught by the sacred lips of Jesus!

As you have noted, the first part consists of solemn emotions of acknowledgment and devotion to the Eternal Father. The second part constitutes our humble invocations for help, for mercy, and for protection. Admirable prayer! well adapted to our needs. How every Catholic soul should ponder upon its contents, and exhale the purest incense of gratitude to its Divine Author. With what value we should estimate a prayer composed and given to us by the God of all wisdom. Another memento of His mercy and His love!

Let us meditate this morning upon the first entreaty of the second part of this celebrated prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread." Give us those things needful for

soul and body. Give us health! Give us energy! Give us Your advice! Give us bread for our bodies! Give us bread for our souls! O Eternal Father! while you give us needed nourishment, ward off from us every desire of greed, every propensity to selfishness! Give us the grace to understand ourselves and compassionate others. While we ask for our daily bread, we should wish that others may also have their daily bread. Thus we would be consistent with our prayer. Again, while we entreat: "Our Father, give us this day our daily bread," we should neither snatch from others their sustenance nor impede them in its legitimate procurement. Did all attend to this petition and obey its teachings, there would not be so much misery. There would not be so much avarice or so much petty tyranny; for this beautifully instructive prayer affords a solution for many a vexed question. Many repeat it, but not all observe its far-reaching propositions. Many hold to the false principle, that the weak must submit, though they may be angry, were you to tell them of their malice. Yes; might is right for them, though the wailings of the helpless and crushed re-echo through the heavens and appeal for sustenance and protection. Prosperity has infatuated the strong; and now they forget that there is a common Father over the miserable, the forlorn, and the poor, as well as over the powerful. The avaricious and the uncharitable pray, if pray at all: "Our Father, give me everything. Give nothing to anybody else, for there is not enough to go around!"

But you, my Christian friends, must observe the tears of the sorrowful and heed the cry of the wanting. Pray with fervor, and apply every day the great principles embodied in the Our Father. Then you will say the Lord's Prayer with blessings for yourselves and pity

for others. Your broad generosity will embrace the needy, and through you God will bestow upon the poor and the unfortunate their daily bread. You will eat your bread in sweetness; because you will have joy from your charity, and the sighs of the helpless will be converted into prayers for your welfare.

Our Father, Who art in heaven, give us this day our daily bread! What a grand confession of our Catholic faith! What a confiding submission to His bounty! Father of heaven, be our Father! Give us counsel in the affairs of life; give us a heart to feel for the woes of others and a hand to help; give us enlightenment of mind; give us an ardent desire for You and heaven; give us this day our daily bread! But some will say:

"How hard we must toil for our daily bread! The sweat must flow from our brows, the muscles of our bodies ache from labor, the head benumbed, and the heart sad; but the reward is small. Our bread is dearly bought by the waste of our lives, and still it hardly suffices for our little ones." This is true; and as deplorable and unnecessary as true; still, the toiler must remember a few things in this connection. The rich are no happier, though they possess more.

> Fortune her gifts may variously dispose,
> And these be happy called, unhappy those;
> But Heaven's just balance equal will appear,
> While those are placed in hope and these in fear:
> Not present good or ill, the joy or curse,
> But future views of better or of worse.—(Pope).

Again, even if the toilers labor, they are mindful, or should be mindful, that their arduous tasks procure not for them their daily bread. Labor cannot yield it, wealth cannot create it; it must come from God's bounteous provisions for man. All the wealth of the

earth, all the energies thereof cannot make one grain of wheat. Our daily bread comes from God, but man, ofttimes diverts it from its fair use. The consequences are hardship, misery, and want. Did man obey the lessons contained in the Lord's Prayer, some would be angels ministering God's bountifulness to poverty. A few are such angels ; and they wear, even in this life, the crown of peace—laurels woven from the prayers and benedictions of the assisted.

It must not be overlooked, that many waste or abuse their daily bread. A man will pray in the morning : Our Father, give me this day my daily bread ; yet ere an hour passes you will see him going into a saloon and taking poison instead of his daily bread. He wants God to give him the necessaries of life, still he squanders what he has. His children and his wife humbly petition God for their daily needs, while the father is destroying their sustenance and impoverishing his own health. His money is spent, his health ruined, his God offended, and his position lost ; for who wants a drunkard about him. This man's morning prayer is a mockery. He misuses the gifts which God gave him. He may clamor against wealth and bemoan his sad lot, but no one is to be blamed so much as himself. He would not suffer want had he been parsimonious with the favors which he had obtained. Desolation sits at his fireside, but he it was who coaxed her thither.

Let us now pause a few moments to consider the man who sold him the stuff which has effected his ruin. If the proprietor is a Catholic, we may presume he says his prayers, at least the Lord's Prayer. Now, how can he ask God for his daily bread when it must come from the devastation of homes and be purchased by the tears and imprecations of wretchedness ? He implores

God for his own daily bread, but he takes the bread from God's little ones. Were he to observe moderation by not selling to those who had enough, his business would be sufficiently reproachful; but he stops not at moderation. He will take the last crust and then regret that there is not more to be taken. He will see a father giving him his last dime, and his poor heart sorrows because the inebriate has not hundreds to offer him. He will tell you perhaps that he did not invite him in. This may be true; still, many do invite such in, and have others to assist them in giving the invitation. He will see a man reeling under the influence of drink, yet he refrains not from giving him more, because the unfortunate has a few more dollars left. It is only now the drunkard is liberal, it is only now he will ask all hands to drink. A Catholic who will sell to a man intoxicated, is an accomplice in that man's sin. The bread gained in this manner will bring him no joy. It is not from God. The maledictions of want and suffering will fall upon his covetous heart and expel all peace. Can God listen to his prayers? Can he say with pure intentions: Our Father, Who art in heaven, give me this day my daily bread? Nay; his life is a contradiction to his prayer. At least avoid immoderation, avoid gambling of all sorts, avoid dishonesty in every form, if you wish to pray with devotion and profit.

O God of all wisdom! give us this day our daily bread. Give us counsel; speak to our hearts and direct the operations of our judgments! Inspire us with worthy motives! Give us prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance! Illumine our intellects and infuse the holy virtue of chastity into our hearts! Give us bread for our bodies and bread for our souls! But

above all and beyond all, give us Yourself in the affectionate sacrament of Your love!

Pray also for prosperity. There is nothing wrong in honest prosperity. It may enable you to calm the sorrows and wipe away the tears of distress from the heart of misery. As long as you say the Our Father with earnest devotion, prosperity will be a blessing to you and a solace to others. Often ask God for His advice. His counsel will be bread to your intellectual achievements. You will understand then what is best to do and what should be avoided. Ask Him not only in your present needs, but entreat Him to counsel you in time of doubt and anxiety. Who has not been involved in intricate, dismaying troubles and knew not what to do? Beg of God for His aid in those trials and all the other trials of life. Do you think it is dangerous to rely on the counsels of Almighty God? Do you imagine He will involve you in difficulties and then leave you to shift for yourselves? You do not harbor such notions, yet many act as if this were the principle of their lives. Have confidence in God; He will not abandon those who centre their hope in Him. Being omniscient, He sees your future and can make provisions to rescue you from every danger. The God Whom you call Father, will not be a treacherous enemy to you. He is your Father, and with a father's love cares for those confiding in Him. In the hours of affliction and mental confusion, He will be bread to your physical energies, to your judgment, and to your intellectual efforts.

Permit me now to exhort you to appeal to your Heavenly Father for the spirit of prayer, for the love of prayer, that you may delight in spiritual contemplation, that you may rejoice in the converse which

your soul holds with its Creator. This spirit of prayer, this whispering of the soul to God in confidence, dissipates all distractions and all lethargy. This spirit of prayer is the food of the soul, is the bread of its life, is its shield against danger, is the torch of its investigations—a communication with heaven, a ray of light from the divine brilliancy, a gift from God!

FOURTH SERMON.

Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

My Dear Friends: Allow me this morning to present for your reflection this instructive petition of the Lord's Prayer. It reminds us and teaches us of our obligation to others in respect to forgiveness, and our expectation of pardon as a reward for our clemency. How amply does the Lord's Prayer embrace our wants, our dependence on God, our gratitude to Him, and our relations to others. In the first part we acknowledge God; we praise Him because He is our Father and provides for us. Then we cry to Him for help, for our daily bread; and now we ask Him to forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Only God could dictate a prayer so simple; yet containing a most sublime act of faith, establishing filial relationship with heaven, constituting the cement of society, and erecting a ladder to the home of endless bliss.

The significance of the present proposition enters into our daily lives. Every day we say the Our Father. Every day we implore God to forgive us our trespasses as we forgive others who trespass against us. It is a fair condition which our Divine Lord puts into the prayer. He requires that we pardon the offenses committed against us, in order that we may be absolved by the almighty power of God from our sins against the Divine Law. The careful observance of

this part of the Lord's Prayer brings harmony out of chaos, cultivates charity, promotes beneficence, and secures applause in heaven. Reflect well upon the lesson it imparts, the fruits it bestows, the condition it requires. It may be I am neither able to point out all the applications it suggests, nor all the benefits it confers ; but in case of such deficiency, you can ponder often upon this beautiful prayer, and every time your soul will be enriched with new thoughts and your meditations compensated with multiplied blessings.

" Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." In this petition you declare that you desire no concession from God which you are not prepared to offer to others ; and, if you do not pardon your enemies, you ask for no pardon for yourselves. If you do not forgive all others from your heart, you declare : " Lord, I will never forgive those who have wronged me. If this is the condition which You demand, You may retain your indulgence toward me. I want it not. I prefer to suffer in hell than pardon my enemies." Such contempt for God's enactments and mercy may shock you ; still, how many a Catholic has knelt in prayer, and recited the Our Father, while the spirit of revenge rankled in his heart ! Did he think of what he was saying ? Did he mean to insult God ? Did he expect mercy while hate festered in his own soul ? He forgot, perhaps, the admonition of his Redeemer in the Gospel of St. Matthew (v.—23 and 24) : " *If thou offerest thy gift at the altar, and there shalt remember that thy brother hath anything against thee ; leave there thy gift before the altar, and first go to be reconciled to thy brother ; and then come and offer thy gift.*" When you hate your neighbor, do not neglect to meditate upon the condition

for pardon inserted in the Lord's Prayer by your Divine Saviour. You will be persuaded, by the aid of grace, to confess that Jesus would not exact your compliance to this condition, were it not for your own good and the welfare of society. Ah ! how much happier would everyone be, were all to pray the Our Father daily and obey its teachings. What peace on earth ! What justice, what charity would prevail ! These vexations harrowing the heart, these demons of revenge impelling to resentment, would be expelled from the soul !

But you reply : " How can I forgive such a person ? She has slandered my reputation. On every available occasion she has calumniated me. Her vile tongue knew no cessation when I was the object of her wrath. I never injured her, nor can I understand what has disturbed the lying devil within her. She may mourn over my good fortune or lament her own failures. I know not ; but, as sure as God hears me, I never wronged her, nor even attempted to injure her. She has tarnished my reputation, which is dearer to me than life. She has caused enmities and jealousies to flourish where nothing but peace and joy once reigned. I hate her ; I recoil from her as I would from the slimy serpent whose bite is death ! " It is sad that any Catholic would provoke another to such a degree and to the utterance of such language. It cannot be denied but that some people suffer intensely from the malice of others ; still, what is gained by affording a harbor to all these malicious things which are said about you ? Why give them shelter ? They devour you ? Why not banish them ? Or, if you cannot expel their memories, why not silence their clamorings, thereby crushing out their malignity ? Why fret the wounds your enemy has caused ? Why assist her in her hellish designs against you ? Why not

kneel before your God and pray: Forgive me my trespasses as I forgive all who trespass against me! O Eternal Father, I offer You my anguish in atonement for all my ingratitude toward You! I rejoice I can make some reparation to You for all my unworthiness! I forgive and seek forgiveness. Ah, such a prayer from a bleeding heart would rob every shaft of its poison. The enemy's strength would be wasted and no permanent wound inflicted. Moreover, a vile, defaming tongue can do no lasting injury. Everyone soon learns of its fangs. Its attacks fall as harmlessly as marbles thrown against armor-plate. Its owner is quickly despised. The poor, miserable creature is poisoned by the venom she would inject into the lives of others. She bites herself, and socially dies.

Another avows he cannot condone the villainy perpetrated upon him. You reason with him and he becomes enraged against his enemy. He breaks forth in heated argument: "How can I forgive the villain who had no pity for me? He drove me almost mad! He robbed me of my lucrative position! He involved me in legal contests; and caring not for the sacredness of testimony, he perjured himself, ruining and disgracing me!

Though innocent, I was declared guilty! The eye of everyone was upon me! Outrage was added to the sentence of guilt! Injustice and outrage made an alliance with adversity against me! And now you ask me to pardon such a monster! No; rather burn in hell than do so! I will have revenge!" Now, though this may appear an aggravated case, still I believe that some are tortured more by their enemies than my words, or in fact any words, can describe; for what must be the anguish and excitement of that person who seeks redress, only to have new outrages heaped upon him.

But now let us calmly consider his condition. If he continues in this feverish state he will destroy his health. In the end, if he strike for revenge, he may implicate himself deeply. Consequently he will give his enemies another advantage over him. He will simply conspire to injure himself most grievously; and should he win revenge, he may find it is dearly bought. He ought to pause and weigh well the words of his Divine Friend and Father: "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive others." Jesus did not give us this prayer without a purpose. He intended it for our benefit. It was to cover every case and be a solution for every wrong. The "Old God" still lives and will not abandon or forget those confiding in Him. "*Revenge is Mine, sayeth the Lord,*" and He will certainly avenge the appeals of all who cry to Him in distress. He may appear slow to the hasty, but we should not sit in judgment upon His decrees. Do not act as though you believed not in God. With all the confidence of your soul, place your trust in Him; and, if your enemies have triumphed unjustly over you, remember the "Old God" still lives and that,

"To err is human, to forgive, divine."

The person smarting under the unrelenting lash of his enemy, must not forget that he has often offended God. The wrongs he endures are incomparably insignificant to the insults with which he abuses or attempts to abuse his Creator. Probably he has not been a close observer of the precept of charity in his relation to others. Can he not now forgive, if the infinite clemency of Almighty God condescends to forgive him? Cannot a servant forgive his fellow servant, when the immense Majesty of heaven pardons the transgression of a weak, frail child of earth? God is the Father of all. If a

sparrow falls not to the ground without His knowledge, will He be unmindful of His children trusting in Him for deliverance? It is best, therefore, to leave the adjustment of all differences and persecutions to Him Who knows the heart and is best capable of judging.

Let us endeavor to illustrate by an example. Supposing an overseer has a number of men under his charge, and that he knows everything which everyone of his men does. If one offend the other, he does not want the offended person to retaliate; but says he will punish in justice. Now, it is quite evident that should one of his men attempt to resent an injury done him or an insult offered him, this man would violate the regulations of the overseer, produce discord, spurn discipline, and probably procure for himself the displeasure of the overseer. It may be that he would be punished for his rashness. Would it not be more judicious to allow the overseer to administer justice? Would it not be more profitable to be patient, and by patience show his confidence in the vigilance and justice of his master. The employee cannot lose anything by patience: for he knows the overseer is cognizant of every act which transpires, and he knows, too, that the overseer is just. But if he attempt to take revenge he may forfeit the friendship and protection of his master. It may be also that he would fail in the attempt. In this case the overseer may not rescue him from his antagonist, but teach him his injudiciousness by leaving him to the rage of his enemy. Now, God is the Eternal Overseer, and do you not agree with me that it is both prudent and wise for us to surrender our grievances to Him?

But, you may say, "It is hard to forget." In fact, you cannot forget. As long as your memory remains active,

you cannot relinquish the records therein contained. You will remember and must remember. Your remembrance of wrong, however, should only be a guide to you, by which you should prevent your enemy from again taking advantage of you. Protect yourselves as best you can ; and you will be able to accomplish this the most effectually when the mantle of God's protection is around you. Pardon others, for you have much to be pardoned by your Eternal Father. Forgive everyone from your heart. Forgiveness is a noble Christian act,—an act which recognizes the supremacy of God ; an act which shows confidence in His justice ; an act which has reliance upon His providence. Injuries inflicted upon you entwine a crown of thorns around the heart ; but forgiveness brings forth from every thorn a rose which exhales the fragrance of divine grace.

FIFTH SERMON.

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

My Dear Friends : The sirens of old allured seamen by their song. In dangerous places along the coast, their bewitching voices were heard, tempting the mariner to destruction. So charming and sweet were their allurements, that the sailor heeded not the peril until he was engulfed by the stormy waters or his vessel dashed to pieces upon the rocks. Ancient story speaks to us of the shipwrecks caused by these nymphs, and the deplorable loss of life occasioned by their fascinating blandishments. Still, while the siren of old is only an imaginary creation, and the story of their crime only a fable, the nymph suggests the sirens of modern times. Those of our age are a reality, tempting man, and woman, too, from the safe course of Christian life into the whirlpools of temptations and dashing them against the rocks of sin. Sometimes these sirens do not possess the charms or the music ascribed to the nymphs of ancient days. Some of them are hideous ; yet by some fatality of deception, they entice man into ruin. In ancient times, only seamen were supposed to fall under the spell of the siren ; in our day, few escape the insidious snares of her modern reality. Thus you see how aptly and propitiously our Divine Saviour embraces in His prayer a petition that God may spare us from the sirens of temptation.

We ought not say that God leads anyone into temp-

tation. It is contrary to His justice and His mercy to induce into sin. St. James says (i.—13): "*God cannot be tempted of evil, neither tempt He any man.*" He allows you to be tempted at times ; and He even tries very good people, thereby making them more perfect : "*For the Lord your God trieth you, that it may appear whether you love Him with all your heart and with all your soul.*" (Deut. xiii.—3.) He permits temptations as he permitted Satan to tempt the saintly Job. But while He tolerates His servants to be harassed by temptation, He does not abandon them to its destroying power. No person relying upon His protection, is tried beyond his endurance. When the tempter is about to triumph, the angels of God come to the relief of the tempted one. In this manner merit is increased and multiplied. Indeed, were man never tempted, His merit would be insignificant, and he would deserve no reward, because he had no struggle or no trial. Great merit and great virtue are the bays of victorious conflicts. It is the resistance he makes against the attacks of the enemy ; it is his efforts to obey the mandates of heaven ; it is his loyalty to God, —which crown him with the merits of a Christian hero. The more he is tempted and conquers, the more his merits are in the kingdom of God. "*Take all that shall be brought upon thee : and in thy sorrow endure, and in thy humiliation keep patience. For gold and silver are tried in the fire, but acceptable men in the furnace of tribulation.*" (Eccli. ii.—4-5.) We should pray, nevertheless, that we be not submerged by temptation ; that when we are faint from resistance, when our courage is failing, God may cast around us the armor of His grace and sustain us from every tendency to fall.

Owing to the degeneracy of some, an observer may

fancy that God leads some into the quagmires of destruction ; or that they were conducted irresistibly by some supernatural power into sinful snares. There are, to be sure, many strange moral phenomena which baffle the observer. But it is certain, nevertheless, that God leads no person into sinful ruin. It is equally certain that He will not permit those trusting in Him to be overwhelmed by temptation. What God does do, is to withdraw His graces from those who abuse them ; or rather, the sinner himself drives those graces from his soul. The result is that he falls ; and falling repeatedly, he becomes a piteous spectacle for men and angels, and an object of study to the inquiring mind. As well might you say that an unsupported body yields not to the force of gravitation and falls not, as argue that a soul unsustained by divine grace can avoid being subdued by temptation. Divine grace is as necessary for spiritual health as food is for the health of the body. A person who discards God, who is so very complacent in his own powers, who is so completely anchored in his own conceits, that he is above asking for divine aid, is a person whom an observer may, after a time, consider mad or under some fatal spell. The ancients noted this phenomenon ; and referring to it, declared : "Whom the gods wish to destroy, they first make mad."

In our age we see many who are mad. They are allured by the sirens of modern society. Some prosper. From poverty they spring into wealth. They are inflated by their success, and in their infatuation of themselves, they become as haughty as Lucifer. They forget God ! They are mad ! They are allured onward until they are dashed upon the promontories of spiritual ruin ; nor do they always escape temporal mis-

fortune. Their madness conjures up misery in some form or another.

Others are charmed by the sirens of their own imagination. They have met some intellectual success, and they fancy they have entered a calm sea of illustrious renown. They are independent investigators, and the telescopes and microscopes of knowledge. They imagine they have drunk the sources of all sciences and all wisdom dry. They have annulled religion, and having searched the heavens, they found no God. They are mad! Their rashness drives them to destruction! The spectre which enchants them will be their ruin!

You have no doubt noticed many a youth who, as years rolled on, became indifferent, gradually severing the moorings of divine grace. The siren of impurity allured him. He listened to her decoying words; and as he listened, he neglected the great Sacrifice of the Mass. He abandoned prayer also. Soon he was engulfed by the storms of sensual passion. Ere long bad companions became his associates. He became mad. Mad in breaking away from God! Mad in casting away the angelic restraints of chastity! Mad in destroying his honorable reputation! Mad in pillaging his own soul and robbing his parents of the joy which parents have in the filial piety of their children.

We could speak of the madness of intemperance—a siren as heinous as she is destructive. We could speak of the madness of dishonesty, which is so common amidst our boasted civilization; of the madness which fills our jails and penitentiaries; of the madness which drives individuals and nations into disaster; but who will attribute this madness to Almighty God? Who will say that the author of all perfection is the cause

of imperfection and crime? The absence of God's grace is the cause, and the cause of that absence I have already intimated. Lead us not then, O Divine Saviour, into temptation! Withdraw not your sustaining power! Though we fall, remember us for whom you died!

The last petition in the Lord's Prayer is: Deliver us from evil. From every evil, we pray; from the evil of sickness, from the evil of contention, from the evil of misfortune, from the terrible evil of rejecting God's grace, from every evil of soul and body. While the evil of sin is not from God, the evil of punishment on account of sin is from God. He says in the Book of Deuteronomy (xxxii.—23): "*I will heap evils upon them and will spend my arrows among them.*" Almighty God had showered His favors upon the Israelites; but with rebellious importunities they gave expression to their icy ingratitude. Hence He punished them by heaping evil upon them. The holy prophet Jeremias was directed to predict evil: "*Wherefore, thus saith the Lord: 'Behold I will bring in evils upon them which they shall not be able to escape, and they shall cry to Me, but I will not hearken to them.'*" From these passages of Sacred Scripture you learn that God is the avenger of sin; that when we persistently transgress the divine law, He will send evil upon us, and in our distress He will not heed our cry for help. Our reckless behavior toward Him will enkindle His wrath. He will not be mocked, but will deal severely with the bold offender.

You may remark: "How strange it is that God does not punish many whom you know to have violated incessantly God's law." Let me reply, you do not know what these sinners suffer. They may not be victims of exterior sufferings, yet who can measure the interior

agony? Besides, God is not limited to this earth. If He punish not here, in eternity He will chastise. He still rules the universe, and His means of punishment are not abridged by any wickedness of the transgressor. Even if He permit some to thrive to the harvest time, He will in that day inflict punishment commensurate to the sins committed. There is no escaping His justice: "*Behold, I will bring in evil upon them which they shall not be able to escape.*"

Some may urge upon our attention: "Why, we have from our childhood been faithful to God. We have prayed. We have turned aside from many of the pleasures and emoluments of life, rather than to offend God. We have endured with patience the rebuffs of ill fortune; yet, notwithstanding our fidelity, our troubles multiply." Now, you must not consider that all the sorrows of life are evils. They may have the face of evil, but they are blessings in disguise. How many Catholics are restrained within the realms of God's love by trouble. Had they not suffered, their end might be miserable. By sorrow they increased in favor with God. By obstacles they were made as oaks to withstand other storms, and grew in mental and spiritual perfection at every blast. Job was a righteous man. So were many others whom history honors for fidelity to God and charity to man, though an apparently ignominious death was the reward of their sterling qualities. In all these troubles God was kindly delivering them from evil.

How useful as well as instructive is this closing petition of the Our Father: Deliver us from evil, O Eternal Father! Send Your Holy Spirit to illumine our misty intellects and stimulate our drowsy wills! Grant that we may always correspond to Your graces. This,

my dear friends, is very important. If we reject God's grace, evil will not only come upon us, but also we will not be capable of bearing good fruit. A dead tree answers not to the influence of spring. The sap cannot ascend to nourish the boughs. No beautiful foliage bedecks the limbs. The tree is dead, though all other vegetation smiles in its beauty and charms the heart of man. The soul which is in mortal sin is similiar to the dead tree. It responds not to the influence of heavenly grace. The heart blossoms not with the flowers of pure, gentle, God-adoring emotion. There is no luxuriance of virtue, there is no animating peace ; nor does it awaken in the hearts of others anything but pity and disgust. Evil is upon it—the evil of spiritual death.

Let us then constantly importune the throne of the Most High for freedom from sinful evil. Grant, O Lord, that we may never sink into those depths of despair which compelled the great Lucifer to cry out :

"Farewell, hope ! and with hope, farewell, fear !
Farewell, remorse ! All good in me is lost ! "—(Milton.)

In the time of harassing and violent temptation, in the time when we are besieged by evil, mayest Thou, O Eternal Father, send thy angels to protect us ! Mayest Thou ever deliver us from evil. Amen.

SERMONS ON THE BLESSED VIRGIN.—FIRST SERMON.

Hail Mary, full of grace.

FEAST OF THE MATERNITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

My Dear Friends: To-day is the feast of the Maternity of the Mother of Jesus, and the second Sunday of October—a month dedicated to the honor of the Holy Rosary. In affectionate veneration of Mary, October is another May. When spring caresses the hills and dales, her smiles producing new life and giving renewed strength to old life, then it is that May awakens devout aspirations and loving remembrances of the Queen of Heaven. But when the summer is passed with its sunshine and its joys; when the sky becomes fretful and angry; when the falling leaves and the dying vegetation speak of death to the heart,—then comes October bearing Mary's rosary. Thus May and October teach us that our lives should begin and end with a fond attachment to the Mother of God, and that we should often say: "Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee!"

Do you say the Hail Mary with the same devotion you did years ago? Are your hearts now as great centres for Mary's veneration and Mary's love as they were in early life? If years have dissipated devotion and chilled the heart's love for Mary, they have done more than this. They have planted sin in the home of devotion, and misery where love for Mary blossomed.

A child of Mary is happy in the peacefulness of a spotless conscience. Every Hail Mary draws the soul nearer its God. In every Hail Mary is found relief for every sorrow and courage for every disappointment. Years ago there was no distraction when reciting the rosary. The heart was infused with holy recollection. The soul rose to God in pious emotion. Every Hail Mary was an angel bearing to the throne of heaven the pure offering of a sinless soul. The heart expanded under this influence of piety, until you saw, or seemed to see, the image of Mary with her Divine Infant in her arms. Approvingly she smiled upon you, while the Divine Child imparted His benediction, thereby filling your souls with inexpressible joy. In thought you kissed the hem of her garments, while you begged her to be ever your friend. You wore in your heart a garland of roses, and every rose was a Hail Mary, and every Hail Mary, a tribute of love! In spirit you laid your garland at the feet of Jesus, imploring Him for friendship, and for peace, and for a happy death! Do you act so now? Have the mysteries of the Rosary the same stimulus, the same aspirations for you now that they had in bygone years? Assuredly, for many of you, the mysteries still have the same influence. They still teach you, they still enlist your meditations and crown you with priceless reward. How sad it is to know that some have not the same fervor; that now they do not say, "Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee," with devotion or with love for the Queen of Angels. Nay, more; some do not say the Hail Mary at all. The heart which once loved Mary, which was once the receptacle of grace, which was once the companion of angels, is now made barren and sterile by the searing blight of sin.

The rosary is a chain of Hail Marys binding you to the throne of God and linking you with other days. It leads you back to childhood, recalls the one who first taught you to say "Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee," and invokes from the dead past, memories which cannot die,—memories endeared to you by fondest associations. Then you said the rosary with affectionate devotion. Every Hail Mary, every rose in each decade, exhaling a spiritual perfume which filled your souls and rose as purest incense to Almighty God. You were drawn closer and closer to Jesus by each Hail Mary, until He lived in your hearts and blessed you with His divine presence. In those days how innocent the soul, how prayerful the heart, how pure the aspirations! The Blessed Virgin was then your mother. You felt you were her children. If temptations have triumphed since then, if sin has expelled innocence, if foul language has defiled the lips which gave praise to Jesus and Mary and Joseph, if the aspirations are now toward hell instead of toward heaven, the rosary still holds you or strives to hold you by the recollections of days now dead! It is difficult to break this chain. When you think every link is broken, you still find it strong and influential with you, as if the Mother of Jesus did not wish to relinquish you to your enemies; as if she remembered the time when you knelt in prayer, asking her to be your mother; as if she were loath to part with those who once loved her and loved her God. No; you cannot break its influence, though you distort every link and wither every rose. Mary loves you still and prays for your conversion.

In Venice there is a painting from the genius of Titian. It represents the coronation of the Blessed Virgin. I gazed upon its beauties for a long time. It is

a masterpiece of almost divine creation. While admiring it, I thought of the painter. I thought how sublime and pure must have been his love for the Queen of Angels. How often he must have said : "Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee!" How his soul must have been inflamed with love for Mary! How pure that soul which could create such an exalted ideal! There was no sin there to blur his genius, nor blemish the pure vision of his great soul. He must have said Hail Marys all day long, so grand is the tribute of his great soul. It is a prayer, a sublime prayer in itself! While gazing upon it, you forget you are still imprisoned in the flesh, and feel that you are in heaven. Let Catholics look upon that painted prayer! I care not how far he has strayed from Mary, he will experience that she has still influence over him, and he will part from the painting with a Hail Mary on his lips. But it is not only Titian and Raphael and Michael Angelo who have honored Mary with the fruits of their talents and genius ; the student and the scholar, the painter and the sculptor, the saint and the sinner, in every land, have often said : "Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee!" Mary's grace still finds a responsive chord in the heart of every Catholic. It might be that all have not the same love for her. Sin might have silenced that love, or the rivalries of temporal affairs might have submerged the pious enthusiasm of early life, yet there are very few Catholics who do not carry her image, and the image of her Divine Son, down deep in their hearts.

The saint particularly understood the greatness of the Mother of God. In his contemplations he perceived the glories of Mary. His soul was filled with a holy veneration for her. In the purity of his soul he could

appreciate better than others, the grandeur of that Queen who is enriched in such an extraordinary manner by her Eternal Father. Living so intimately with God, holding incessant converse with Him, his soul glowed under the enriching efficacy of divine grace and was consequently more capable of estimating the gentleness and humility and friendship of Mary. In spirit he saw her kneeling at the manger of Bethlehem, and exclaimed in the fulness of his heart: "Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee!" Yea, the Lord was surely with her. She fondled Him to sleep, she carried Him in her arms, she nursed Him at her bosom. Truly the Lord was with her, and His presence illuminated her soul with the rays of His divinity. The saint knew all this, and in his meditations his heart was subdued into the most fervent reverence, and the emotions which heaved his bosom could find no expression in the human voice. Mary was near. He believed she was his friend, and with Mary's friendship he knew that Jesus was united.

Nor is the saint the only one to derive consolation and hope from Mary's prayers. The sinner with a heart burdened with affliction, has raised his sin-tortured soul to her in supplication, and she repelled him not. Mercy is her Son's great attribute, and certainly she loves those who come to Him with sorrowing hearts. What has touched the sinner's heart? What has made him pause? What has given him resolution to go once more to confession? Ah, it was a thought of other days! A thought of the time when he said the rosary, of the time when his soul loved the good, when peace reigned in his heart and angels were his companions! He again takes up the rosary. He finds a friend in every bead, and every bead tells him of Mary; and Mary, the

Mother of Jesus, whispers solace to his aching heart. He looks upon his fingers which told the beads so often in the morning of his life. They were pure then. They were not sullied by the contamination of vice. His innocent fingers had counted the pure beads, and he thinks of the joys with which every Hail Mary was blessed. He learns that they are still his friends and that they again lead him to Jesus and Mary. No ; the chain cannot be broken. There is a memory attached to every bead. There are joys and tears associated with every one, and Mary knows them all. She assists her Divine Son in searching for the lost sheep who was once her child and the child of God. It appears almost impossible for anyone who devoutly recited the rosary in childhood to be lost forever. There are too many happy memories connected therewith, and these memories cannot be effaced.

In this age of boasted culture, there is no civilizing agent more successful than the rosary of the Blessed Virgin. In the rosary there is true culture. Other religious agents may be laboring hard to promote the spiritual interests of the human race ; but there is none so efficacious as the garland of Mary. This embraces the great mysteries of Christian faith, and every mystery is sustained by prayer and meditation. Herein is Christian education, Christian training, Christian culture! Herein is contained the doctrine of Christ's birth, love, death, and resurrection ; of Mary's part in the economy of Christian salvation; and the teaching, sanctifying, and confirming power of the Holy Ghost. What an aid, therefore, is not the rosary in the work of civilization ! The past and the present demonstrate this. In lands far distant from Europe or America, you hear of the inhabitants being semi-barbarous ; but you also learn

from persons who have studied their habits and visited these countries, that the inhabitants are courteous, obedient, honest, and chaste, and that no people are more so. What has trained them ? Where did they acquire all the characteristics which are the elements of true civilization ? They found them in the rosary of the Blessed Virgin. It was this devotion which trained them. It was this devotion which imparted an education without which no civilization can exisit. This devotion converted the barbarous disposition into the manners of a true Christian. It could not be otherwise ; for the rosary contains all the factors requisite for the promotion and sustenance of the highest forms of civilization. The Hail Mary will convert the savage into a docile child of Christianity. It has accomplished this feat ; it has accomplished more than the rapid-fire gun, more than all the cruelty inflicted by all the modern implements of war. Since the rosary embraces so many mysteries, and these mysteries embody all the chief principles of Christianity ; and since true civilization cannot be maintained except while it draws its life-sustaining nourishment from Christianity, therefore the rosary is the greatest agent in extending and perpetuating Christianity, and as a consequence, of maintaining and advancing civilization.

Were the despot to say the rosary with earnest devotion, he would be subdued by its influence and moulded into a liberal, broad-souled man. He could not say so many Hail Marys without reflecting upon the gentleness of the Mother of God and the humility and patience of her Divine Son. These influences would restrain his tyranny, would culture his heart with the calming doctrines of Christianity, would elevate his manners, would render him a docile child of Mary and

a friend of the human race. On the other hand, the subject would not be rebellious, were he to avail himself of the same devotion. He would be temperate in his demands and forbearing in his relations to government. He would take a broad view of things and make allowance for human defects. Hence, ruler and subject would live more amiably together, were both to employ the rosary as a means of knowing God's will and performing the civilizing principles therein contained or suggested.

Capital and Labor would also be harmonized by the same docilizing process. Capital would respect Labor, and Labor, Capital. The employer who devoutly says the rosary must necessarily be influenced by its sweet, mild culture. He would ponder upon the value of a human soul. His regard for every human creature would be enlarged by contemplating the estimate with which Jesus valued every human soul, and the rosary would impart to him some knowledge of that estimate. He would, consequently, be moderate in his regulations and just in his compensation to the toiler. The latter, in turn, educated by the rosary, could not forget his duties and his obligations to his employer. He could not be reckless in the performance of his labor, nor excessive or unreasonable in his demands. Both would respect each other. Both would see that above them is Another Who judges their conduct and deals with them accordingly. Beyond the temporal things of life, they would discern an abode of endless reward. Their ambition would be to realize this reward; and, therefore, they would not injure each other, but live as friends and children of Mary.

Then, say often the Hail Mary, and say the rosary whenever you have the opportunity. Its benign influ-

ence will give culture to the heart, vigor to the intellect, and good will to all. And when life troubles will have closed, may the Queen of Heaven crown you with a garland of bliss woven from the Hail Marys said by you on earth !

SECOND SERMON.

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death.

My Dear Friends: In this beautiful springtime the heart beats light and the soul is filled with admiration for the beauties of nature. The aged feel young again, and the young heart bounds with the joy of its surroundings. In the midst of these beauties and glories of this delightful season, the soul of every Catholic praises God and admires the grandeur of His works in the material universe. This being the month of May, your devotion, ardent at all times, rises now, instinctively as well as rationally, to the Mother of Jesus. This beautiful month draws you closer to her, and you love in May to kneel before her statue and pray: "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death!"

This devout supplication was composed many centuries ago by the Church of God, and was said and is said by millions of Catholics. If you except the Lord's Prayer, there is no other so beautiful and so sacred as the Hail Mary. The Angel Gabriel, voicing the will of Heaven, declared the first part: "Hail! full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women." How important was this salutation to the human race! What vast interests were herein involved! How Heaven must have stood amazed when the import of

this announcement was revealed—the Son of God to become man! The second part was made by St. Elizabeth. When the Blessed Virgin visited her she was overcome by the presence of the Mother of God and exclaimed: "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb!" St. Elizabeth thus repeats a portion of the angel's salutation, and adds: "Blessed is the fruit of thy womb." The Church, as we have already intimated, proclaimed the third or last part of this edifying, instructive, sacred prayer. Now, what composition, what prayer, except the Lord's Prayer, ever had such exalted authors as the Hail Mary? The Archangel bearing the mandate of Heaven proclaims the first part; St. Elizabeth filled with the Holy Ghost gives utterance to the second part; and the Catholic Church, the voice of God speaking to the human race, composes the third part. How efficacious must this prayer be, which had such sublime authors! How fruitful in obtaining graces from Almighty God. What a perpetual history of the Incarnation and the devotion to Jesus and Mary in every age!

Let us consider, on this beautitul Sunday morning in May, the last part of the Hail Mary. Before entering into such a consideration, I cannot do better than quote a few lines from one of Italy's greatest poets:

> "Beautiful Virgin! clothed with the sun,
> Crowned with the stars—
> Love pricks me on to utter speech of thee;
> But feeble to commence without thy aid."—(Petrarch.)

What a beautiful poetical expression! How it speaks the devotion of a poet in an age of faith! All this great poem is a sublime prayer to the Queen of Angels; and I shall, therefore, make use of it during

this sermon. Some may object to the employment of secular thought in sacred discourse; but to me, it appears that the noblest thoughts entwined in language spring from noblest souls; and, though some such souls were not specially consecrated to God, they nevertheless had the spark of the Divinity within them, and that nobility and power of soul to speak the loftiest thought. It cannot be wrong, then, to employ the sublime sentiment of genius to praise God, who gave such gifted souls to human creatures. Both Protestant and secular Catholic writers have paid the tribute of their richly endowed minds to the Blessed Virgin, Mother of Jesus; and just as we cull the beautiful flowers of the field to decorate her altar, so we cull the sublimest thoughts to wreath her sacred brow with the praises of men.

The Church says in addressing her: "Holy Mary, Mother of God"; and never was so sublime an expression used in addressing any other creature; and no human mind can grasp its full significance. It is only God Himself who understands what that implies. It was He who first declared to the powers of heaven her holiness and sanctity. She is holy because Almighty God declared from the throne of heaven that she was to be the Mother of His Eternal Son; she is holy because she is the Mother of that Son; she is holy in her immaculate conception; she is holy in her humility, her meekness, her poverty; she is holy in all those elevating virtues with which the Eternal Father adorned and enriched her as the receptacle of His Incarnate Son! She is holy, and saints and sages, angels and archangels, and countless millions of Christians, have accepted the proclamation of Almighty God and echoed and re-echoed the praises of her sanctity.

"Virgin! of all unparalleled, alone,
Who with thy beauties hast enamored heaven,
Whose like has never been nor e'er shall be;
For holy thoughts with Christ and pious acts
To the true God a sacred living shrine
In thy fecund virginity have made."—(Petrarch.)

Truly she is alone and unparalleled. Angels must have stood in amazement when beholding the virtuous ornaments of her pure soul. With what wealth of grace and perfection did not infinite resources embellish that Mother who can call her son God! During this beautiful month every Catholic should erect in his heart a shrine to Mary; and the purest, the most delicate, and the most affectionate emotions of this living temple, should be incense hallowing that shrine. Devout, enrapturing thoughts of praise, gratitude, and supplication should supply the lamp burning before the shrine in that sanctuary.

My Christian friends, Mary's power was foretold by Almighty God in the morning of creation. In the early dawn of that morning, Satan planned the downfall of the human race; and when human perfection animated the Garden of Paradise, he succeeded in executing his plans. Our first parents fell, and God was angry at their fall; but Satan was not to triumph; a Redeemer was promised, and a future woman was to crush the power of Satan. "*I will put enmities*," said the Almighty to Satan, "*between thee and the woman; and thy seed and her seed; she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel.*" (Gen. iii.—15.)

O Virgin! pure and perfect in each part, you overthrew the power of Satan when you submitted to the will of heaven and became the Mother of the Saviour of mankind.

Deplorable indeed was this fall; and as general over

the face of the earth as it was and is deplorable. Not only was man condemned on account of his trangression of the divine law, but the earth itself was cursed; for God declared to Adam : "*Because thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou should not eat, cursed is the earth in thy work: with labor and toil shalt thou eat thereof all the days of thy life.*" (Gen. iii.—17.) An awful blight had settled down upon the fair face of the earth ; and man's intellect was obscured by the cloud of sin. This sin bred contention and contention gave birth to other crimes and sins, until man raised his hand against the life of his fellow man, the strong crushed the weak, power was enthroned as the god of right, and nation met nation in the throes of death upon the field of strife. This appalling consequence of sin continued and will ever continue as long as man remains an inhabitant of this globe and another man is left to dispute his power. This is one of the temporal effects of man's great fall from grace. But while the numerous ills of life remain, the Redeemer ransomed the soul of man ; and now you can by your good works attain to a degree of merit and reward far exceeding that which would be yours, had Adam and Eve never sinned. But a co-operator in this great work of the redemption was necessary, and this willing co-operator is the Mother of Jesus. It is decreed in heaven that the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity will clothe Himself in human form and save the human race. What perfection then was lavished by the Eternal Father upon that creature who was to weave from her own nature the human garb which enveloped the Divinity ! You may form some idea of her resplendent virtues from the woman described in the apocalypse

by St. John : "*And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars.* (xii.—1.) St. Francis De Sales in eulogizing the Blessed Virgin, exclaims: "Of this heavenly queen, from my heart I proclaim this loving and true thought. The angels and saints are only compared to stars, and the first of those to the fairest of these. But she is fair as the moon, as easily to be discerned from the other saints as the sun is from the stars. She receives a crown not like those of other saints, but of twelve stars." Well then does the Church pray: "Holy Mary, Mother of God." Well do the powers of heaven exclaim : "Holy Mary, Mother of God." Well does every Catholic pray : "Holy Mary, Mother of God" ; for the Eternal Father of the heavens and the earth has proclaimed this great, elevating, crowning truth ; and His Divine Son has confirmed, by His birth, this same sublime, enlightening, efficacious distinction bestowed upon His Blessed Mother !

But the Church continuing, exclaims : "Pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death." Pray for us sinners ; pray for us, because your Divine Son died for us ; pray for us because we are your children ; pray for us because our sins have deservedly blocked the avenues to the throne of mercy.

"Virgin ! if ever yet
The misery of man and mortal things
To mercy moved thee, to my prayer incline ;
Help me in this my strife,
Though I am but of dust, and thou heaven's radiant Queen !"
—(Petrarch.)

How many a tempest-tossed soul has invoked the Queen of Heaven with these same sentiments of the

celebrated Italian poet! The language was probably not so beautiful, but the desire of the soul for relief was as ardent and as suppliant. How many a harrowed heart has appealed to her:

"Virgin! if ever yet
The misery of man and mortal things
To mercy move thee, to my prayer incline."

Ah, Virgin! "if ever yet," and certainly millions have sought your aid, and millions have, through your intercession, obtained relief for every woe. The misery of man to mercy moved thee often; then to my prayer incline, for I am most wretched. I am wedded to misfortune and to dire want. Every hope is blasted by disaster; every effort frustrated by some malicious fate; every joy changed to sorrow; all ambition crushed; death has scourged my home, and friends have vanished at the approach of poverty!

"Help me in this my strife,
Though I am but of dust and thou heaven's radiant Queen!"

I am but of dust, and in my misery far more abject than the dust. But, radiant Queen of Heaven, you will have compassion on this poor, frail dust. You will stoop from your bright throne to lift, encourage, and sustain one for whom your Jesus died.

"With bended knee and broken heart, I pray
That thou my guide wouldst be,
And to such prosperous end direct my faltering way."
—(Petrarch.)

With bended knee and broken heart I pray that you direct me to your Son, to sanctifying grace and innocent peace. If I am a wretch and a sinner, look once more upon Calvary's height. See the sacred blood of your Divine Son gushing forth from every fountain of mercy. Behold that haggard, fainting look. Hear

the voice of mercy from that dying, sacred tongue. See the glance of pity from those expiring eyes.

"Till now, whate'er I sought, wherever turned,
My life has passed in torment and in tears."—(Petrarch.)

But I have confidence in you. You love to help those for whom your Divine Son suffered such awful agony. The prints of the nails are still visible in His sacred hands and feet, and you will appeal to those for mercy, pardon, and peace for your unfortunate suppliant.

"O Virgin! pure and good,
Delay not till I reach my last year."—(Petrarch.)

Dispel these torments which have harassed me so long. Dry these tears which are the messengers of my grief. I know that patient suffering has its reward in heaven; but I am faint and weary of the strife. Help me, then, before my last moan and sigh escape my oppressed heart.

Most assuredly such appeals will find solace in the tender heart of Mary, and how many such appeals have been made! How affectionately she treats the sinner; and how sorrowful she must be when a sinner listens not to her entreaties. "No one has recourse to thy protection, implored thy help, or sought thy mediation, without obtaining relief," says her great advocate, St. Bernard. She has prayed and assisted by her prayers saints and sinners; she has been the help of Christians and the refuge of the afflicted. Many a one she has kindly led to the door of the confessional, and after that confession how the purified soul held gracious converse with her, thanking her for her aid and begging her to offer the gifts of his relieved heart to her Divine Son as a token of gratitude for His great mercy.

"At the hour of our death." The Church teaches us

to ask her to assist us at the hour of our death. This is a most important time. On it the happiness or misery of eternity depends. Will she abandon or neglect in this sad trial those who prayed so often to her for aid at the hour of death? Oh, no; she will then be especially attentive to all who were devoted to her. Then she will bend tenderly over their dying couch and solace their last moments on earth. What a happy death will that Catholic have who always cherished in his heart devotion for the Mother of sorrows! Every Hail Mary will then have its reward, and the Mother of Jesus will not then forget her supplicating child. How many a Catholic, since the divine tragedy on Calvary, expressed the sentiment of the poet, that he may have a happy death.

"Virgin! in whom I fix my every hope,
Who canst and willst assist me in great need,
Forsake me not in this my worst extreme."—(Petrarch.)

And that Virgin who never deceived hope nor abandoned sorrow, will not desert the person who so often said with true devotion: "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death." Constantly she will watch over him during life, warding off danger, protecting from accidents, assuaging grief, guarding against sin; and at the last hour of his life, Death will be shorn of his terrors by her presence. And Jesus Himself will come in the Holy Viaticum, imparting strength and confidence to the departing soul. In concluding, we cannot express any sentiment more appropriate than that contained in the closing lines of this sublime poem from which we have quoted so freely:

"The day must come, nor distant far its date,
Time flies so swift and sure.
O peerless and alone!

When death my heart, now conscience-struck, shall seize,
Commend me, Virgin! then to thy dear Son,
True God and Very Man,
That my last sigh in peace may in His arms be breathed.

THIRD SERMON.

" Hail ! full of Grace, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among women." (Luke i.—28.)

ROSARY SUNDAY.

My Dear Brethren: To-day is the feast of the Holy Rosary. A beautiful feast it is, fraught with thought and endowed with Catholic edification. The feast of the rosary, the feast of the crown of Mary, should have joy for every heart. The rosary, with every bead a spiritual rose for the brow of our queen, should be our joy. Ought Catholics hesitate to entwine such a crown for such a queen ? Should they be indifferent or lazy in so beautiful a devotion ? A Catholic who is, must not complain if Mary will not comfort him in his sorrows. He has not been her child ; and, in not being her child, he failed to be a child of Jesus, her Divine Son. The Catholic who loves the one, loves the other.

The rosary is a devotion toward the Blessed Virgin on account of her motherly care of Christians ; particularly on account of her special defence against the Turks at momentous periods. In this devotion is contained the history of the great fountain sources of Christianity. The mysteries of the incarnation and birth, suffering and death, resurrection and ascension, the descent of the Holy Ghost, and the joys and sorrows of Mary. What wonderful thoughts do not these mysteries inspire ! Thoughts so profound, you cannot

reach them! Thoughts so high, you cannot soar to them! Thoughts so incomprehensible to human intellect, you cannot grasp them! Thoughts which edify and console, though they baffle the most prodigious intelligence.

The rosary—how does it begin? The very first thing which you meet is the crucifix. What is that? An image of Christ crucified. Who is Christ? The Son of God. This little crucifix speaks to you of the marvellous mercy of God; of his beneficence to man; of His sacrifice for the human race. There is the picture of Jesus dying on the cross. For what or for whom? For you and me. Devoted Friend, You are to us poor, frail sinners a merciful benefactor! You gave yourself for our salvation. This little crucifix tells you of His love for you; tells you of the redemption; tells you how high an estimate Jesus has for you;—it tells you all this and much more. It leads you back to the dawn of Creation and forward to your eternal destiny. The next on the rosary—is what? It is a little bead. How does its prayer begin? By the noblest act of human intellect, "I believe in God." I believe in God! What a sublime expression of faith! How it elevates the creature and draws him to his God! Grandest act of an intelligent soul: "I believe in God, the Father Almighty, the Creator of heaven and earth!" You had just been studying the crucifix. The mind penetrated into the labyrinth of thought. Mystery after mystery presented themselves. Your comprehension failed; your intellect was confounded; but now you turn in faith to the Supreme Being and exclaim: "I believe in God, the Father Almighty, the Creator of heaven and earth!" What faith! What confidence! Wonderful prayer! Dig-

nified creature! who has the grace to utter thus your belief in your Creator.

"And in Jesus Christ His only Son." Another proof of your fidelity. You transcend the impenetrable veil which hides the mystery of the incarnation of the Son of God, and all the other wonders which surround the life of Christ. You pray in the wealth of your faith, "I believe in Jesus Christ His only Son." Your intellect bows in adoration before the Altar of God; and what you cannot understand, you accept upon the veracity of Jesus. Faith fills your soul with grandest devotion; you are absorbed in contemplation of God's goodness to sinners.

Ought you not revere that sacred name of Jesus? You have been meditating upon his suffering while you gaze in love upon the crucifix. Intense love toward Jesus, your Saviour, and intense compassion. After such edifying, regenerating devotion, will you lay down your rosary, and with a foul tongue misuse that holy name and insult your Saviour? Yea, the Catholic who will do it, has a corrupt heart. He is debased! Has no faith! Bespeaks the filthiness of his own impoverished soul! Still, there are so-called Catholics who glory in such shame; who dare insult their crucified Redeemer by their ignorant imprecations. Fie on such Catholics! You disgrace yourself in trying to be blackguards; you scandalize the innocent by your stupid behavior; and you bring upon your poor, desolate selves the anger of heaven. How the angels must blush at your madness! I believe you do not say the rosary.

Without continuing further this Catholic prayer of faith, let me inquire what invocation is in the next bead? Is it not the Our Father? "Our Father, who art in heaven," is the commencement of the prayer

for the next rose in the crown of heaven's Queen. How gracious is this prayer! Ponder it well. Our Father! The Eternal Father, our Father! Who taught us thus to pray? Jesus Christ, His Divine Son. "When you pray," He said, "say, our Father, who art in heaven," and continues this affectionate prayer to its conclusion. Love of love, what can surpass it in affection! Our Father! Not an angry God now! No tyrant, no indifferent preserver! And His Eternal Son teaching us this prayer. Love of the Father and the Son calling us to be more intimate with both. The Father of heaven—our Father, our Creator, our Father! our eternal joy, telling us through the lips of His co-eternal Son that He is our Father. Might not the angels be confounded by such love toward sinners!

Hallowed be thy name! Oh, where is the Catholic who would desecrate that holy name of Father? Where is the Catholic who does not enshrine it in his soul? To keep it hallowed, to increase and retain its sacredness among men, should be the unrelenting pursuit of everyone of you. How can man be better occupied than promoting the glory of Him who allows us to call Him Our Father. Sacred prayer! Sacred because first expressed by the most sacred person, Jesus. Sacred because it is a supplication to the most sacred person, Almighty God. This morning we cannot do more than call your attention to the introductory parts of these beautiful prayers, out of which a diadem of prayer may be woven for the Mother of Jesus.

Ah! the next bead is especially dedicated to Mary. "Hail! full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women." Who first uttered this prayer? God Himself. There came a time in heaven when the countenance of the Eternal Father wore an anxious

expression. His face indicated that a great resolve was laboring in His eternal bosom. He summoned His Archangel Gabriel to Him and commissioned Gabriel to go to Nazareth and declare to a virgin called Mary : "Hail ! Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee ; blessed art thou among women."

It was God then Who first pronounced these words. Gabriel only obeyed the mandate of his Eternal King. It was God Who first said, "Hail, Mary." Extraordinary distinction ! Marvellous honor ! Notable approval of her sanctity ! Singular favor, wonderful promotion, sacred dignity, were thus bestowed upon you, O benign Queen of Heaven ! Why should we Catholics be censured for loving you, when your God in this manner honored you ? It is ignorance which prompts such censure. It is darkness of the understanding which would disrespect you, and thereby dishonor Him Who first said, "Hail ! Mary, full of grace."

Ah ! Mary, you have been honored, notwithstanding this blindness. Kings have laid their crowns at your feet and prayed the rosary. Soldiers their swords, sailors their mantles, poets their verses, genius its fruits. All have ofttimes entwined for your holy brow a crown of spiritual roses. Your rosary has demonstrated the equality of man. The emperor has had his rosary, so the poor negro ; the princess has her rosary, so the beggar girl ; genius and ignorance have knelt before your statue and repeated the same prayer. Eloquence has praised you ; poetry has embalmed your merits ; while the prayers of poverty have risen in sacred incense, a tribute to you, the Mother of the poor. Glorious equality ! How much, Mary, have you done to establish the brotherhood of man. As Jesus, your Son, died for all, you entertain no distinction of

persons. If there is any discrimination, it arises not from man's social inequality, but from his merits and his love for the Redeemer. In your presence all men are created equal.

What consolation have not all obtained through your intercession. Eyes have brought their tears, hearts their sorrows, souls their anxieties, lips their moans. The moans were calmed into peace, sorrows converted into joys, tears were wiped away, anxieties changed to hope. You have been a mother to the saint and to the sinner as well. The penitent crushed by remorse sought your help, and you led her kindly by the hand to the feet of Mercy, and she became another Magdalen in her love for Jesus.

Even the very chain of the rosary becomes for us a bond uniting us to the throne of God; drawing us closer and closer to heaven; raising us little by little to the realms where our Saviour reigns; opening the eyes of the soul more and more, until the Angel of Death announces our temporal existence is closing; and catching a glimpse of what God has prepared for us, we exclaim: "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now, the last moment of our life."

FOURTH SERMON.

Render, therefore, honor to whom honor is due. (St. Paul. Rom. xiii.—7.) *

On the Propriety of Catholic Veneration for the Blessed Virgin Mary.

My Dear Brethren: The Creator has endowed the intellect of man with unalterable principles of truth and justice. So innate are they interwoven in our nature, that to obliterate them would require the destruction of the human soul. Bigotry and prejudice may for a time silence their operations; but this state of mental disorder cannot banish the principles themselves. When the excitement of the hour will have passed and the passions will have grown cold, truth and justice will once more assert their supremacy and maintain their undying authority. The public mind will become more conservative; it will condemn with prudence and wisdom the false, and, often contrary to its own prejudices, acquiesce in the true. Such is now the tendency of the enlightened Protestant mind in respect to the veneration of the Mother of Jesus. The waves of popular prejudice, which have been for centuries dashing against Catholic devotion, are gradually breaking. The mind, indeed, of our dissenting friends needs only enlightenment upon Catholic truths to dissipate the objections which they raise to the veneration

* The Author's first sermon.

of the Queen of Heaven, and to subvert the erroneous opinions which some of them hold, that Catholics render to Mary divine homage; for many of our Protestant friends unite broad views with liberal sentiments; hence, if they would only consider the real character, together with the reasonableness of the veneration given by us to the Mother of God, justice would acknowledge the validity of such devotion, while truth would impel them to concede its propriety.

For the purpose, then, of demonstrating this propriety, as well as to refute some charges which are brought against the veneration of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and to enhance your devotion to her, we propose for your consideration: first, that some persons, and even material objects, have ever been considered venerable; second, that the Blessed Virgin, Mother of God, is more entitled to our esteem and veneration than these persons and material objects to which we refer.

It is important here to distinguish between veneration and adoration; for we are often charged with bestowing upon Mary divine honors. Adoration as performed by Christians consists in offering supreme worship to Almighty God. Catholics do not directly or indirectly manifest this homage to the Blessed Virgin. Our theologians are as competent to discriminate between the worship due the Supreme Being and the veneration which is becoming to beings of inferior power and dignity, as those who are so ignorant as to heap upon us such ungrounded imputations. We venerate the Mother of God, and we do not deny that acts of love and veneration are incessantly shown by us to her; and, moreover, we contend that those who differ with us in religious principles will, after mature

deliberation, acknowledge such respect to be lawful and commendable. For instead of subverting the honor due to God, it stabilitates that honor by demonstrating the superiority of the Omnipotent ; instead of narrowing the basis of divine worship, it tends to enlarge the sphere of devotion and subjection to the first and most August Being of the universe, by observing the difference between the most exalted finite being and the Infinite.

That there are degrees in the veneration manifested toward works of art and persons of note, all will admit. It will also be conceded that Catholics have at least some ability in judging those degrees. Now, if we are capable of such discernment, why condemn us as being so blind as not to recognize a more notable dissimilarity,—the dissimilarity between the creature and the Creator. Is not the dissimilitude greater ; or must we be considered so stupid as not to discern the difference ; or so obstinate as not to admit its existence ? Each supposition is equally absurd ; for if no difference were noted, our conception of God would be destroyed, because God is the Infinite Being ; and from the signification of this term there cannot be two beings of this degree. The other is so false that we ought to pass it over with the contempt it deserves ; but still, for their information we tell them that the Catholic Church has ever distinguished between the creature and the Creator, between the finite and the Infinite, between the universe and God. The publishers of so erroneous a charge should be more discreet ; for they display by such assertions their shallowness as well as their ignorance of the intellectual warfare which has been continuously waged by the Catholic Church against those systems of false philosophy which would

eliminate God from the universe and despoil Him of the love and worship of His creatures.

Nothing can be more conformable to unbiased reason than our veneration for the Mother of Jesus. For do you not venerate persons distinguished for their deeds of valor and patriotism? Do you not even esteem and venerate the memory of inanimate objects? Which of you could gaze upon the paintings of some great Grecian or Italian artist with a cold heart and unmoved feelings? While your admiration kindles for the breathing canvas or the exquisitely chiseled marble, your mind reverts with enthusiastic veneration toward the artist. Every faculty is aglow when you study the retouching and expression of these masterpieces which are on exhibition before you; but you marvel at the accuracy of the taste and the grandeur of the painter's and the sculptor's genius! Your veneration for these grand conceptions of genius and the masters who gave them birth, is not alone. Men of talent and acknowledged ability have honored them, do honor them; and when the ravages of time will have wasted them, history will be an enduring monument to their glory!

Has not, moreover, every nation her heroes and her statesmen, whom the people not only honor, but vie with one another in expressing their love and veneration? Will not our dissenting brethren, with whom we regret to differ, subscribe to the truth of this statement? Unhesitatingly, I answer they do; and my reason is, that they extol with veneration bordering on worship the merits of valor upon the battlefield, and applaud with enthusiasm the splendid achievements of wisdom and eloquence in the council chambers of the nation. These are considerations approved by all.

Why then refuse the veneration due to the Mother of God? To every one is rendered the honor owed him, and to many, more than is due them; but to the Blessed Virgin there must be no honor, no veneration! She declares: "Henceforth all nations will call me blessed"; but thousands who call themselves followers of her Son, spurn her claim and despise her pre-eminence. Still, her faithful children venerate her and respect her superiority and call her blessed. Not only is this honor shown her because she is a pious, virtuous Virgin endowed with many general graces; but especially on account of her extraordinary grace and exaltation in being the Mother of the Redeemer.

It will also be conceded, without any contention, that the greater the perfection in the fine arts, the greater and more general is the approbation and honor. The same concession will be granted in regard to rational nature; hence, without going into any labored discussion upon the various degrees of perfection, let us state as an axiom that the greater the Christian virtue, the greater the perfection. With this basis we maintain that the more virtuous a person is, the more he is entitled to our esteem and veneration. But, next to God, what person is so pure, so exalted, so virtuous as the Mother of God? Some assert, however, that the veneration given to the Blessed Virgin derogates from the worship of the Infinite Being. With as much reason they could argue that the attributes ascribed to the moon by astronomical calculations, detract from the power and splendor of the sun; or that the legitimate respect we entertain for a bishop robs the Pope of his majesty and holiness.

Of Christians who upbraid us on account of our love and affection for the Queen of Heaven, let me inquire:

would you not, if the opportunity offered, kneel before the Holy Sepulchre with veneration and reverence? Would you not embrace with the most tender emotions the sacred wood upon which the mangled form of the Redeemer hung in merciless agony during three long, terrible hours? Yea; you would shed tears of gratitude, and with tear-dimmed eye and penitential heart view the relics of man's Redemption. Why then should you censure us for venerating the Mother who bore the Redeemer; who fondled and caressed Him; who stood at the foot of the cross, and with a mother's heart and a mother's affection beheld the last sad moments of her expiring Son? You do not reflect, nor do you understand our devotion and attachment to her; or, as we urged in the beginning, from the very principles of your intellect you would acquiesce in the reasonableness of our veneration toward the Mother of the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity.

Those reflections lead us to determine, in the second place, whether the Mother of our Divine Saviour is not only deserving our veneration, but whether she has not more claim to it than those persons and objects which we have mentioned. What judge shall we invoke? What discriminating power will weigh with accuracy and impartiality the force and truth of the arguments? Will our opponents object to the Omniscient God? Most assuredly not. All Christians consider Him the last and highest tribunal of justice. But this very judge to whom we appeal, has already by His very act given His sanction to her greater veneration. Yea, indeed, He has venerated her Himself; for He has exalted her to the dignity of Mother of His co-eternal Son. Who will censure the wisdom of Almighty God because He has expressed so much esteem and pref-

erence for her who was destined to crush the serpent's head? Was not the Son of God, moreover, subject to her? Did He not obey her as His Mother? Did he not venerate her as His Mother? Did not the Holy Ghost estimate her above all other women, and regard her as the only one worthy to become the Mother of the Second Person of the Adorable Trinity? Did not all three concur in venerating her as the second Eve who should be the Mother of the Most High and of the posterity of succeeding ages?

Let us now consider for a few moments the proposition which prohibits honor and veneration to be shown to the Mother of Jesus. We shall examine and compare a few of the actions and sayings of our adversaries for the purpose of ascertaining their inconsistencies. They tell us they are admirers of the beautiful, the true, and the good. We willingly concede this. Their art galleries are adorned and enriched with the gems and relics of ages. Public honor is conferred upon them: for they are often preserved at the public expense, and the public crowd to see and praise them. The true, both in nature and art, is extolled and highly appreciated, while the good are immortalized in verse or carved imperishably in marble. Our public parks and other places of interest possess monuments erected by a grateful and venerating people to some patron of knowledge or benefactor of the state. Upon the walls of their dwellings are hanging from exquisite tapestry the pictures of some dear dead; but go into their churches, and where are the paintings and sculpture emblematic of our Divine Saviour, of the Redemption, of the Mother of the Redeemer, which in Catholic churches fill the mind with love, reverence, and veneration? "Ah!" they will tell you, "those things are too

superstitious." But we just call their attention to the public monuments and their veneration ; and inquire is this not also superstitious ? Why have repositories of art where the memory of the good and the great are preserved ; why have your own residences pictured with the images of departed friends, if it is superstitious to have the temple of God embellished with paintings and statuary expressive of Him to whose honor it has been raised, or of those who constitute the Holy Family ? We are told that the images of the Blessed Virgin in our churches must be torn down ; for veneration toward them is idolatrous ! We maintain, nevertheless, that the logical consequence of their assertion demands more. It demands that all the emblems raised to man's greatness and for the perpetuity of his memory, be leveled to the dust ; for, were those persons greater than the Mother of the Saviour of the world ? Do they enjoy a more distinguished place in the kingdom of heaven ? Is the transmission of their names to posterity of more vital importance ? Although we are proud in saying that no one of our dissenting friends entertains a more elevated or grander ideal of that veneration which is owed our ancestorial benefactors than ourselves ; still, regard for the truth compels us to answer : No, they were not greater, neither are they more exalted in celestial glory, nor is the preservation of their memories more sacred ; for in these days of unbelief her memory vitalizes Christianity, gives proofs of the Redemption, strengthens and perpetuates Christian truths, and is indissolubly linked with the growth and endurance of all that is moral, of all that is religious ! We do no injustice to our non-Catholic friends when we say : were the Blessed Virgin not loved and venerated by Catholics, Protestants would enshrine her in their hearts

But from their arguments we deduce that all the immortal dead are to be honored and venerated excepting the Mother of Jesus. She who gave us the Redeemer; who was elevated to the highest dignity on earth and the most exalted in heaven; whose claims have been defended by the most celebrated Doctors of the Church; whose praises have been sung in every clime during almost nineteen centuries; whom the Fathers of the Church and all Christendom have loved and venerated; that she must be forgotten, that her veneration must cease,—because some in this enlightened age say it is idolatrous! They boldly assert that we are superstitious, that we are ignorant, and this ignorance accounts for the pious practices of our Church! To such rant and cant we reply that, "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread."

Have not the erroneous charges of our opponents been met and refuted by the incontestable evidence of facts and reason? Permit us to affirm that the nature and substance of the charges are most favorable comments upon the propriety of our veneration; for could more solid objections have been produced, they would have urged them, clad in the armor of strong logic and bitter sarcasm. Their weakness in attacking our devotion to the Mother of Jesus should persuade them that their cause is unjust; and indeed many Protestants must feel how inconsistent they act and what ingratitude they manifest to the Blessed Virgin who, for her Son's sake, loves them and prays for them. Ah! if Protestants only reflected and purged their souls of prejudice, what affectionate devotion they would have for Mary. See what love converts cherish for her. They are more faithful to her than many of us who have been born and trained in the Catholic faith. The full glory of Mary's greatness has burst upon them, and

they do all in their power now to compensate for their want of kindness to her in the past.

But for you who have been nursed with the blessings of the Church and the graces of Almighty God and the prayers of Mary, can you be prevailed upon by sneers and scoffs to relinquish your love for her? Can you ever hesitate in your veneration for one whom Jesus, the Son of God, loved so much? Can you ever esteem and honor her with those marked expressions of elevated distinction with which the Holy Trinity has exalted her? No; you are Catholics and understand her marvellous prerogatives. Your only anxiety arises from the deficiency of your fervor, fearing lest you do not sufficiently express your gratitude to her for the many blessings she has obtained for you from her Divine Son.

Your devotion for the Mother of God is rational. You distinguish between the majesty of the Supreme Being and the venerableness of the Blessed Virgin. While you worship God as the Creator, Ruler, and Preserver of all things, you implore her maternal care and protection. The Son of God Himself, fainting upon the cross, gave her as a mother to you. The night before His passion He gave Himself in the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist; but now in the throes of death, now when every tie of friendship grows stronger, now when His solicitude for His friends increases with His anguish, He bequeathes them His Mother: "*Mother, behold thy son; son behold thy mother*"—the last grand legacy of the dying Redeemer! And now that she is in heaven, she will continue to be a mother to you and to me. She will beseech her Divine Son to extenuate His justice; she will encourage you when you are weak; and should you have fallen, she will strive to

raise and support you; she will pray for you before the throne of mercy.

Who will deny us the right to have recourse to Mary when Jesus exhorts us to pray for one another? Whom shall we request, who will more graciously listen to our petitions, or present them more faithfully before the God of mercy? Who will charge us with superstition or polytheism, if with aching heart and throbbing brow we entreat her who never deceived hope nor abandoned sorrow. And thou, O most venerable Mother! permit us not to wander from the path of virtue. Be our guide and advocate during our trials on earth; and in the last moments of our tempest-tossed life, be the Morning Star of our hope on the threshold of eternity! When the cold sweat of death will have settled upon our haggard and troubled brow, may your celestial presence illumine our clouded intellects and inflame our hearts with hope! May the last breath of our mortal pilgrimage be the first to praise you and your Divine Son in the mansions of eternal day!

FIFTH SERMON.

Comforter of the afflicted, pray for us.

My Dear Brethren : Autumn is again with us, and with it October, a month dedicated to the Queen of Angels. Since you knelt before her altar in May, the summer has vanished with her beauties and her glories, with her sorrows and her joys. Autumn weeps and mourns over the departed days of summer. The foliage which once sparkled in its luxuriance is now sad and faded ; the fields have lost their freshness and beauty ; the song of the birds is hushed—they have winged themselves to a more joyful climate ; the face of nature which in May was full of hope, buoyancy, and rapture, is now haggard, disfigured, and sorrowful. Nature is afflicted, and she imparts afflictions to us ; because we sympathize with her on account of the sadness which is upon her. The sympathy we thus bestow tells of our own regrets for the decay which has come upon her brilliancy and magnificence. As we muse upon her affliction and the sympathetic effects it has upon ourselves, the thoughts and the sorrows and losses of the human heart commingle with our musings. We wonder how the human heart has borne the burden of so many sorrows. Truly, it would be more often despondent had it not its hope anchored in heaven ; and had it not, in its afflictions, a comforter in the person of the Blessed Mother of Jesus.

Because we cry to her in our sorrow, some upbraid us and say we are superstitious. But if you reflect you will easily see that the one who loves Mary, loves her Divine Child; and the one who sincerely loves the Divine Child, must love His Virgin Mother. You cannot love the Mother and hate the Son; or love the Son and hate the Mother. Especially is this true when the mother is the Mother of the Divine Child and the Divine Child is the Son of God. The Child and the Mother are dear to every Catholic heart; and since the Mother first knelt beside her Child's crib at Bethlehem, how many Catholic hearts have knelt at her feet and implored from the Divine Child in her arms mercy and pardon; and to her they pleaded: Comforter of the afflicted, pray for us! Her memory is interwoven with the history of Christianity; her triumphs, the triumphs of Christianity; her veneration, the veneration of Christianity; her praises, the advancement of Christianity!

From the first affliction which she suffered to the present moment, she has been the Mother of the afflicted. When the Apostles were deprived of their Divine Guide and Master, she was a mother to them, advising, encouraging, and praying for them. How tranquil must have been the life of St. John the Apostle in having her for his mother. Her prayers and her encouragement were his solace and his peace. He was the only one of the twelve who did not suffer the agony of martyrdom. His life flowed away peacefully, and he was blessed with glimpses of heaven before he was called to his eternal reward with his Master and his God.

As St. Peter and St. Paul journeyed on their lonely way to the City of Rome, their hearts were no doubt

afflicted, and in their affliction their prayers sought the aid of the Mother of sorrows. Judging from a human standpoint, what misgivings must have oppressed their souls. They were to announce to the pride and the wisdom of the Eternal City the crucifixion of Jesus; that He is the Son of God; that He was scourged and crowned with thorns and died upon a cross. They must have expected to hear from the masters and the plebeians and the patricians this reply: "You tell us how your Master died upon the cross; that He is God, the Creator and Governor of the universe; but such a death does not comport with His claims. A God dying upon a cross is ridiculous. Such a death bespeaks weakness, not strength; wickedness, not innocence; debasement, not the glory of the heavens." To be sure St. Peter and St. Paul were sustained by the ardor of their undertaking, the proofs which they saw; the grace of Jesus and the prayers of Mary. When they were led forth to execution, and while in prison, how often in their fervency did they appeal to Mary: Comforter of the afflicted, pray for us!

The ruins of the great amphitheatre are now crumbling under the weight of years; still, as one gazes upon them he is overawed by their majesty and the things which they conjure up. As he ponders in contemplating the cruel scenes enacted there, in thought he hears the roaring of the lions, the prowling of the tigers, the cringing of the panthers, as they enter from their cages into the vast arena and prepare to assault the early Christians condemned to death. These martyrs gave testimony of their faith by the blood of their hearts. They consecrated Rome by that blood and made the amphitheatre a sacred place. Yet, when you consider their sufferings, when you meditate upon

their imprisonment, and contemplate the visions of their cruel death, with which their imaginations must have tortured them, you will agree with me that countless times they raised their anguish-bound hearts to Mary and exclaimed: Comforter of the afflicted, pray for us!

Since those early persecutions numberless souls in their affliction have sought the intercession of that comforter. In the wars with the Turk and during the Crusades, non-combatants joined their supplications with the warrior to obtain aid from the Mother of sorrows and the help of Christians. Monks and nuns, priest, bishop, and pope have besought her aid. Royalty knelt with poverty and acknowledged her benign influence. The scholar and the semi-civilized gave expression to their gratitude to her in heart-rejoicing prayer. The joy of the happy was offered as a token of thanksgiving, and the sigh of grief rose to her celestial throne in supplication for relief. All these had confidence in her prayers; for they knew that her Divine Son would listen graciously to her petitions and that He had still an interest in calming sorrow. In chapel, church, and cathedral, in the hovel of the poor, in the palace of the rich, in the fields and on the roads, how many a happy or grief-laden heart has prayed: Comforter of the afflicted, pray for us!

In Ireland, during the last three centuries, how many have clung to her for help in their woe! Yes, we may say for the last eight centuries how many have begged her in their untold miseries to banish sorrow and cruelty from their unhappy land! Though the rigor of oppression did not reign supreme until political tyranny combined with religious frenzy, still the Green Isle suffered the scourge of the invader since the year

1167. What land has loved Mary more, and what land has been the home of more sighs and moans! Her monasteries were plundered, her monks butchered; her priests imprisoned, exiled, or murdered; her teachers banished or slaughtered! Over the bleak hills and through lonely ravines they were hunted. Like beasts of prey, a bounty was offered for their apprehension or death. The laity gathered in caves or on the mountains to pray and hear Mass; and had they been caught, the penalty could not be greater were they guilty of high treason. Even during the present century the misery and fierce cruelty they endured could hardly be surpassed. Yea, even the Grand Old Man, Gladstone, inflicted upon this helpless people one of the most severe coercions which it has been the destiny of this unfortunate island to endure. But during all this savage torture, during pestilence and famine, the Irish heart was true to the Blessed Virgin and her Divine Son. Others would have become despondent; others would have sacrificed their faith; but they were constant and faithful. Did Mary comfort them in their sorrows? Did she allay the grief of their hearts? Did she give hope though she could not prevent the tyranny which crushed them? Most assuredly she was with them and wept at their misfortunes, just as she wept when her Divine Son, mangled and bleeding from every pore, carried His cross to Calvary; she was with them, otherwise there would not be a trace of the Old Faith left in Ireland. But Ireland is still Catholic, and the Irish heart still loves the Mother of Jesus. Yet during all those centuries how many a starving child, how many a sorrowful, gray-headed father, how many an anguish-oppressed mother, how many a patriot on his way to the scaffold, how many a one famishing

from starvation by the wayside, has prayed in sorrow : Comforter of the afflicted, pray for us ?

In England, before the breaking out of that religious revolt called the Reformation, the nation was Catholic. When the Emancipation Bill was passed there were in all England only about 100,000 who retained the Catholic faith. Persecution and the heads-man's axe devastated the land and drenched the soil with human blood. Thomas More, the renowned statesman and scholar ; Bishop Fisher, the celebrated churchman; Mary Queen of Scots, the unhappy victim of her cousin Elizabeth,— drank from the springs of bitterness and ingratitude. Because they would not forfeit their allegiance to God and espouse the irreligious mandates of a tyrant, the block was dyed with their innocent blood. But while in prison awaiting their terrible fate, while on the way to execution, how many and many a time their hearts said : Comforter of the afflicted, pray for us and our unhappy land ! Who can now contemplate the bloody scenes of so many years ? Who can feel the affliction and torture which rent their hearts ? There was no redress for anguish, no protection against legal murder, no justice for innocence, no hope on this side of the grave for Catholics. Anguish was mocked ; murder was sanctioned by the law ; justice had disappeared from England, and there was no hope except that centred in the sacred hearts of Jesus and Mary. Consider yourselves, if you can, persecuted ; all you have confiscated, yourselves torn from your homes and dragged to a dungeon, your remonstrances scoffed at, your efforts to defend yourselves subdued by manacles, your appeal for justice about to be silenced by the executioner's axe ; and if you do not curse your persecutors, you will turn to Mary, and from the depths of

your affliction cry : Mother of the afflicted, pray for us !

During the Reign of Terror in France, many and many a soul cried to Mary for courage and relief. Royalty was not spared ; and in its suffering, how often it appealed to the Mother of sorrows for constancy and support. Fanaticism was mad, and in its madness made no distinction between sex or age. If there was any distinction, it was in favor of the libertine who betrayed the king and queen ; who dragged from their abodes of peace, bishop, priest, and the religious ; who silenced, with the guillotine, the cry for justice. Monasteries and convents were pillaged and their inmates murdered. The nun was torn from her asylum of tranquillity and prayer, and ruthlessly sacrificed to glut the rage of anarchy. The priest was dragged from the altar and slaughtered as though he were a beast of prey. Countless numbers of innocent people perished in the destruction of those awful years of madness ; and during those atrocious scenes how many a prayer rose to the Blessed Virgin from afflicted hearts. She could not slake the maddened thirst for innocent blood. The rabble was wild with the fury of hell ; but she pointed to the cross, and from this sacred emblem resignation and fortitude were drawn for every woe. She was their solace in the dungeon, she sustained them in their anguish, and she nerved them with hope on the scaffold. Oh ! who can estimate the cries of the heart which pleaded for help in those appalling days of affliction ? When every hope of justice was vain, when cruelty was enraged by the vociferations of the mob, when men became demons; oh, how many an innocent soul pleaded with Mary for deliverance ! She gave them courage to endure their agony ; she prayed for them and breathed into their tortured souls sentiments of an

eternal home where no pain exists. In all this indescribable misery and anguish many a sufferer prayed: Mother of the afflicted, help me, a poor unfortunate victim!

I shall not call your attention to the ravages of the Commune after the Franco-Prussian war, though the Bishop of Paris was shot while attempting to pacify the mob, and the streets of this famous city ran with the blood of inoffending citizens; but request you to contemplate the acts of tyranny perpetrated in Germany after that war. What reward did the German Catholics get for their bravery and blood from Bismarck and the emperor? Let me answer, the reward which tyrants give to the weak. Germany had conquered France. The victorious army was camped in the City of Paris. All was confusion and dismay on the part of the French, and amidst this confusion and dismay Germany dictated to the French the terms of peace. It was an awful blow to the chivalrous French when in their capital and their regal palace the King of Prussia was declared emperor of all Germany. All this was bitter medicine for their pride; but who assisted the German king to victory; who placed him in such a powerful position; who exalted him in the eyes of the nations of the world? It was the German Catholics. Without their help France would not be humiliated nor the German king a dictator. Still, how were they repaid? By laws which curtailed their religious freedom, which imprisoned their ecclesiastics, confiscated their property, and drove numbers into exile. This was the reward for their patriotism; this the compensation for their blood; this the gratitude of their king! Instead of honor for their bravery, they received insults; instead of equality before the law, they writhed in anguish under injustice;

instead of encouragement, they beheld with pain the nun banished from her tranquil cell and the priest torn from his people! What anguish was there! What anguish was endured by those exiles as they left their native land and searched for shelter in foreign lands! What lives were lost on the perilous journey; what sickness undergone; what heart-aches suffered! And in all this wrong and consequent wretchedness, how many a soul wept with prayer to the Comforter of the afflicted! From the depths of their troubled hearts they besieged Mary with supplications for patience and endurance. As they took the last farewell look at their peaceful cells, as they entered the gloomy prison walls, as they turned to take a last adieu of their native land, how the agonized heart sought the Mother of Jesus for hope and solace!

Throughout all those painful scenes to which I have directed your attention, how many a tear was shed, how many a moan rent the soul, how many a grief tortured the heart; and every grief and every moan and every tear was ladened with a prayer to Mary! Ah, what would Catholics do but for this Comforter of the afflicted! She is their intercessor with Jesus; she is their hope in affliction, their solace in every adversity. Her influence with Catholics explains their constancy in adversity, their patience under injustice, their confidence in God. Her influence banishes every thought of self-destruction or prevents it from assailing the mind; her influence has banished sorrow and sustained perseverance; her influence has been the culture of the confessor, the stimulus of the priesthood, the support of Catholics in every trial!

Now, should we not always have a devout veneration and love for her who is so interested in our welfare

Should we not daily recite that beautiful prayer, the rosary. This prayer recalls the mysteries of our faith, the suffering of Mary, and the love of Jesus for mankind. You should teach your children to love and esteem her who is the Mother of Jesus; for by loving her they will be drawn more intimately to her Divine Son. But what do I say? Why do I instruct you to venerate Mary? I am sure you do. I am certain you instil into the hearts of your children a love for the Mother of the afflicted. I have watched with joy your children receiving first Holy Communion; I have seen their little hands clasped in prayer, as they approached the altar; and wondered if they were not asking Mary for permission to take her Divine Son into their hearts. I know they prayed to her during those holy, peaceful, happy moments. I taught them to pray to her; and I am sure their pure little hearts went out to her in prayer and asked her to come with Jesus into their hearts. Oh! if they always remain faithful to her, they will ever have Jesus in their souls. But should some of them forget God; should the day come when they will not pray to Mary, when every trace of innocence will have been banished from their souls; still, I cannot think they will ever be eternally lost. The Comforter of the afflicted, the Refuge of sinners, will touch their petrified hearts, and a prayer for pardon and the sigh of sorrow will break forth.

My Christian friends, it has been my purpose this morning to augment your devotion to the Blessed Virgin. To accomplish this much-desired end, we reviewed a few of those terrible persecutions through which Catholics passed with devotion to Mary and with fidelity to God. Those appalling ordeals tested their faith; and their persecutors discovered, after the clouds

of affliction began to break, that Catholics were as staunch in their allegiance to God, as faithful to their Church, as devout to the Mother of Jesus, as before the painful struggle commenced. Amidst the darkness the grief-permeated heart naturally sought consolation from the Mother of sorrows. Her career on earth was too closely allied with sorrow not to awaken appeals for pity in the time of distress ; her heart, which bled at the feet of her Crucified Son, would it not sympathize with the sorrows of her children ? Her beloved Child died for the redemption and salvation of man ; would she not assist those who endured tortures of body and of soul rather than deny Him ? Ah ! nothing is more natural to the Catholic heart than to turn to Mary for help in the hour of need and sorrow.

In conclusion, let us direct our hearts to her and pray : O Comforter of the afflicted ! protect us from the snares of sin. Oh ! should we be so unfortunate as to offend your Divine Son, lead us to repentance. Help us in our afflictions ; and in the last affliction of life, when the hand of Death presses heavily upon us, O Mother of sorrows ! calm our agitation and infuse hope into our troubled souls.

FEAST OF THE MOST HOLY NAME OF JESUS.

And after eight days were accomplished that the Child should be circumcised, His name was called Jesus, which was called by the angel, before He was conceived in the womb. (Luke ii.—21.)

ON THE EFFICACY OF THE HOLY NAME OF JESUS.

My Christian Brethren : You have traveled already some distance with the new year. You have made her acquaintance, and the journey is thus far known to you. Indeed, the journey of all your past life is known to you. This morning in thought you can, in a few moments, retravel the path of your whole life. From childhood to the present moment you can quickly glance and mention every important event which passes upon the tablets of your memory. On the panorama of your mind the joys and the sorrows of the past are painted. All these things are known to you ; but attempt to peer into the future, and your vision is short. You know not what this year will bring you. Nay, you are ignorant of the things which will transpire before the rising of another sun. The more you try to sound the depths of the future, the more you are confounded. Bewildered by your vain attempts, you may ofttimes recoil at the thoughts of the morrow. In this perplexity the Church comes to your relief. She bids you have confidence in God, and points to the

religious feasts of the year as mile-stones guiding you on your way. On one of the first of these mile-stones which we meet in the new year is written the name of this sublime feast. Your guide, the Catholic Church, points out to you the inscription. You read; and behold, it is the great feast of the Holy Name of Jesus! You pause to pray and adore! The everlasting memories associated with this Holy Name fill your soul, and you turn to Jesus with grateful, imploring hearts! Thus far it is evident that you have traveled the right path, for hereon you find this grand feast indicative of the way to glorious immortality. You who have come to church this morning with true Catholic devotion to reverence the Holy Name of Jesus, give evidence that the compass of your souls points in the right direction; and Jesus during this year will be your solace and support; for He has said: "*I am the bread of life; he that cometh to Me shall not hunger; and he that believeth in Me, shall never thirst.*" (John vi.—35.)

During the year you pass, one after another, what we may with some propriety call ecclesiastical mile-stones, on your journey heavenward. On each of these is inscribed the name of a great feast; each tells of the journey made; each gives hope and fortitude; at each you stop to rest and give praise to God. These are the notable feasts of the year; and as you celebrate them, one after another, you are measuring the distance you have made in this vale of tears. This morning your guide points out to you this sublime feast. You rest for the day. You enter this church to adore Jesus and revere His Holy Name. Like the kings and the shepherds of old, you kneel before the Babe of Bethlehem in the tabernacle. You thank Him for the assistance He has given you thus far on your journey, and

you beg Him to remain with you to the end of the way.

As of old a pillar of fire directed the Israelites by night and dissipated the darkness, so will this Holy Name guide you during the gloom of adversity and scatter the darkness your enemies cast around about you. If you invoke with earnest confidence this Holy Name, you will never be entrapped in the meshes of sin, disgrace, remorse, or despair. It will be a pillar of light—a searchlight revealing the evil motives of your enemies and exposing the dangers which threaten you. Bad company will never seduce you, for you will never allow yourself to come under its influence. You will not disturb the neighborhood by drunken brawls, for you will be engaged in some worthy employment. On Sunday you will not be saturated with strong beverage, but pious worshippers of Jesus, Whose Sacred Name you so reverently venerate. In sorrow, disappointment, and affliction you will call upon Jesus, and He will be the Good Shepherd to you. In prosperity you will not abandon Him; for His name, by constant usage, is engraved upon your soul. Success, then, will not make fools of you nor involve you in disaster. In joy your hearts will be directed by the discipline you acquire while worshiping Jesus. In a word, He will be a pillar of fire, leading you kindly and safely toward eternal happiness, and the reflection of this happiness will make you happy here. He will be your light, as Himself has declared in these words: "*I am the light of the world: he that followeth Me, walketh not in darkness, but shall have the light of life.*" (Luke viii.—12.)

Its efficacy has been the shield of the saints in their temptations. They conquered by its irresistible power.

You can do the same. Whenever the devil tempts you to wrong, place yourselves under the protection of that unconquerable Name. It matters not how violent or continuous the assaults of Satan may be, Jesus is watching over you. If you carry His Sacred Name in your hearts, you cannot fail. The darts of hell will fall harmlessly and the maliciousness of human enemies will not prevail. If Jesus be with you, what power can conquer you? There is none. He is the Lord of heaven and earth, the Master of all creation. He is the Friend of the weak, the Refuge of sinners, the Model of the virtuous, and the Lover of mankind. He is the joy of the Angels, the Solace of the afflicted, and the Hope of the dying. To carry His badge in your hearts is an honor and a sign that you are His devout followers. What an exalted privilege! What an elevated distinction! What angelic dignity it is to be honored with the insignia of such a king! The saints desired it, the martyrs cherished it, the most pious virgin prized it, and the most celebrated Christian scholars, painters, and sculptors found in it the highest honor and the highest reward!

Many are the beneficent effects of the invocation of the Holy Name of Jesus. During all the ages of the Church miracles have been performed by calling upon the assistance of that Name. We shall, however, mention but one, and this is as authentic as the Inspired Word, for it is taken from the Acts of the Apostles. St. Luke tells us in the third chapter that Saint Peter and St. John went up to the temple to pray. At that gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, a cripple was placed, that he may beg alms from those who entered. As the two Apostles approached, he entreated them for help. St. Peter answering, said: "*Silver and*

gold I have none ; but what I have I give thee : in the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise and walk." Immediately the cripple was healed, and leaped with joy. What joy was his when health infused into every fibre of his body vivacity, energy, and gratitude ! What miraculous efficacy there was in that Holy Name to impart vitality and rejoicement to the poor cripple ! Yea, but this was only physical infirmity. Estimate, if you can, the joy and peace experienced by the sinner when, by the power of Jesus, sinful disease is expelled from the soul ! Feel, if you are able, the exquisite emotions of the soul of a penitent restored to the friendship of God ! The penitent communes with Jesus, and who can describe the sentiments expressed ? No one can. It is heart-language—the heart of the grateful penitent speaking to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Some emotions can never be expressed by the human voice. You can judge somewhat of their intensity by the expression of the face, the glow of the eye, or the agitation of the whole body. Never yet has eloquence painted in speech the thrilling, expansive, joyous emotions which a Canova or an Angelo possessed when he gazed for the first time upon the finished product of his genius. But the emotions of an artist, however grand and thrilling, are inferior to the heart's calm, grateful, confiding emotions when it holds converse with the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Physical ills have been healed by calling upon that Most Holy Name. These have come under the observation of the human eye ; but what about those deep-seated, prostrating ills of the heart—ills which the sufferer dares not speak to another for fear of treachery ; ills which consume the heart, producing sadness and exiling joy ; ills of disappointment, of failure, of

unrequited friendship! Yea, how often such a heart has breathed forth its sorrows to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and implored the Eternal Father, through the efficacy of that Most Holy Name, to soothe the aching heart and to give peace and confidence to its pitiful moans! How often the troubled heart has found a friend in Jesus when all other friends were treacherous! Oh, then, cherish the Sacred Name! Cherish the Sacred Heart of Jesus for all its tenderness to woe, for all its help to the weak, for all its compassion for sinners. Exert yourselves to increase in your own hearts a great devotion for the Most Holy Name; and encourage others to foster great affection for that Name which is so powerful in heaven, on earth, and in hell. By acts of reparation endeavor to compensate for all the insults and ingratitude with which the Holy Name of Jesus is abused. Do all in your power to awaken and increase devotion to Him who watches so kindly over the human race.

But while we contemplate the glory of this Holy Name and the reverence which is due it, let me ask you to consider for a few minutes the unkindness, the ingratitude, the baseness of those who abuse, in a most shocking manner, that Sacred Name. It is painful to know that among those revilers can be found some Catholics. What can be thought of such? What can be thought of Catholics who insultingly speak that Holy Name? Who pride themselves upon the facility with which they misuse it? With polluted tongues and more polluted hearts they hesitate not to abuse that Name which is revered by angels. Among the lowest and depraved associates they will speak that Name — speak it in places in which "toughs" would not utter the name of their sister or mother. By their foul

language they tell how degraded they are and how nearly every semblance of religion is vanished. Such a person glories in his base acquirements and impiously strives to secure the envious title of "tough." This is his ambition. How deep and broad his sentiments must be, who labors for so great a goal! Fie upon such Catholics who know not better; or, if knowing better, debase themselves with such foul language. How can such Catholics expect mercy, protection, and temporal prosperity from the Saviour Whom they so wantonly abuse? Yet, this very Saviour is giving them the faculty of speech with which they insult Him; is giving them the health, the vigor, and the life with which they profane His Holy Name. How inconsistent their conduct with the religion they profess. They believe that Jesus suffered, died, and redeemed them; still a heathen would not be guilty of the vituperation they vomit forth. Of all people, Catholics should ever manifest the greatest reverence for this Holy Name. They it is who receive the most numerous favors. They are nourished in a special manner by the grace of the Redemption; still, those who speak the Holy Name with irreverent tongue, appreciate not God's blessings. These are ingrates who have no hearts to be thankful to their Eternal Benefactor; their hearts are poisoned by the filthy fumes which emanate from their mouths; the depths of the depravity to which they have sunk can be easily estimated by considering their vocabulary and their associates. It is a habit? Then why acquire so disgraceful a habit? Why not destroy it by every effort, since you have been so unfortunate as to form a habit so pernicious in its nature and so offensive to Almighty God? Should you not banish from your soul a habit which induces you to mistreat the Holy Name

of Jesus in a most shameful manner, even on your way to church ? Yea, some will even swear violently at the very door of the church. Can you conceive of anything more incompatible with the faith they say they profess ? What would you think of an atheist who would thus deport himself at the threshold of your church ? You would be indignant and would resent the outrage done your Saviour ; but remember, an insult from a professed friend is more keenly felt than from a stranger ; and an outrage perpetrated by a Catholic upon his greatest Friend and noblest Benefactor is ingratitude which is indescribable.

Let us now inquire, where do children learn profanity. Alas ! it cannot be denied that often they acquire it at home. The father has the habit and soon instils it into the minds of his children. Where the young mind should be trained to virtue, it is polluted by an erring father and sometimes a vicious mother. The father swears at the child ; the child in turn will ere long swear at the father. When profane language is used by the parents, can the children be blamed if they follow the example given them from their childhood days ? And what is even more abominable, some parents will smile upon the child when it swears. It is so cute, you know. But this cuteness will some day bring sorrow to the parent's heart. Do not imitate such foolish parents ; but teach your children to revere the Holy Name. Chide them if they misuse it. Imbue their souls with a horror for any profanation of a sacred thing. Impart to them by your pious example a profound reverence for the Sacred Heart of Jesus ; and this will bring joy to your old age and constancy and fortitude to them when you are in your graves.

Let every Catholic exert himself in dissipating this

deplorable vice. Let each one begin with himself, if he has been accustomed to misuse the name of God. Let him impose some penance upon himself every time he transgresses the second commandment. He will soon master himself, and the habit will be abolished. In this manner he will encourage others to do likewise, while his own conversion will bespeak the veneration he has for the sacred Name of Jesus.

Our Saviour tells us that whatever we ask the Father in His Name, will be granted to us. Let us then beseech the Eternal Father to give us the grace to revere always the Most Holy Name of His Divine Son. Let us entreat Him that, in the last moments of our lives, we may pronounce the Holy Name of Jesus with confidence and joy; that the last words upon the dying lips of each of us may be: "Jesus, into your hands I commend my spirit"; and the first to be heard in eternity: "You have asked the Father in My Name; I shall now grant it to you; you have been faithful children on earth, now enter into the endless joy prepared for you."

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.—FIRST SERMON.

And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee (St. John ii.—2.)

ON THE DESTRUCTIVENESS OF DIVORCE.

The Sacred Scriptures, my dear brethren, give us, in this chapter of St. John, an account of the most distinguished marriage feast ever recorded in history or known to the human race. Why so extraordinary? you may ask; and add: "It was not a wedding of the nobility, but of peasants. What was it compared to those feasts of wedlock where wealth is neither limited nor spared, where magnificence combines with power to make the festive occasion one of merriment unrestrained and pomp unexcelled? What was it to those gorgeous fêtes of royal palaces where heirs to thrones plight their vows of matrimony; where all that opulence and splendor can impart are strained that the feast may be one of joy and grandeur." You who are so impressed by munificence and royalty, forget that Jesus was present at the marriage feast of Cana. It was His presence, together with that of His Blessed Mother and the disciples, which bestows so notable a distinction upon this festival related by St. John. All other weddings sink into insignificance when compared with the one of Cana of Galilee, just as all other persons and

their affluence are comparatively nothing in the consideration which distinguishes between men and the Son of God. The brilliancy of marriage is transitory; but the recollection of that one rendered celebrated by the Saviour of the world, will continue as long as the Catholic Church. The union of Adam and Eve was unquestionably blessed by Almighty God; but in Cana Jesus was there in person, and sanctified the feast by the performance of His first miracle.

That this marriage is unequalled on account of the distinguished guests, Jesus, Mary, and the disciples, none of you will deny; yet the purpose of our Divine Lord upon that occasion was of still greater import. His intention was to set the seal of His approval upon Christian wedlock, and sanctify it by the mysterious action of His power as manifested in the transubstantiation of water into wine. He thus teaches the sacredness of marriage and the divine regard entertained for the contracting parties. From this miracle, and also from the nature of wedlock, you can easily adduce the vast importance of matrimony. In the beginning God created man that he may inhabit the earth for a time and heaven for eternity. Parents die, their offspring survive for a time; but these in turn are doomed to the grave. In this manner the human race increases in number until society is formed and states and nations constituted. The better the offspring is trained to habits of morality and religion, the more civilized and prosperous the nation. Without such training there can be no permanent advancement in those things which cooperate in promoting a nation's true greatness; without the fostering care of honest parents and Christian education, the child will disturb society and hazard his eternal welfare. Hence, it follows that matri-

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mony is not only beneficial to the state, but that Christian marriage is indispensable to its greatness and perpetuity. Bound together as they are by the holy vows of matrimony, Catholic parents understand they are under obligations to each other, to their children, to society, and to God. Religion directs them in the education of their children; and parental affection, sustained by Almighty God's aid, induces them to toil for the temporal and everlasting interests of their offspring. The Church blesses their vows and God bestows His graces upon them. The Divine Author of the New Dispensation raised the contract of matrimony to the sacredness of a sacrament. The contracting parties, if they are Catholics, receive the benedictions of their Church and the blessings of heaven. In this manner their condition is inestimably exalted, their sustenance in bearing the trials of life more stable, their contribution to the welfare of society more ennobling, their own happiness and that of their children more secured. Tertullian beautifully describes Christian marriage thus: "How can we find words to describe the happiness of that marriage which the Church joins together; and the oblation confirms; and the blessings seal; the angels report; the Father ratifies."

Considering then the sacredness of the nuptial contract and its incomputable effects upon the destinies of the family and the nation, you must acknowledge that great praise is due the Catholic Church for her zealous guardianship of this sacrament. Any compact between man and woman to live together as husband and wife, which is dissolvable, is deficient as a nuptial contract, and is destructive to the happiness of the family and the life of a nation. It is deficient, for our Divine Lord said: "*What, therefore, God hath joined together, let not*

man put asunder." (Math. xix.—6.) And for the same reason it is destructive to society, because Jesus came to establish a more perfect society than any which had previously existed. He laid down principles for the government and guidance of society, and any violation of these principles will engender ruin. An observance of them produces peace, prosperity, and permanence ; but ignore them, and the decline of a nation's greatness begins. It is unwise to annul or frustrate His law. No one loves the human race as did He. No one knows the wants of society better ; nor is any one so capable to legislate for its advancement and endurance. Then, why not follow His legislation ? Why not abide by the legislation of Him Who is all-wise, and Who died that society may attain to its highest development on earth and its endless happiness in heaven ?

Jesus declares : "*What, therefore, God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.*" But State legislation says in its enactments : "We are greater than God, therefore we will defeat His design ; we are wiser than God, therefore we will have a new decree ; we are more competent to direct society, therefore we will annul the contract of matrimony." The wisdom of modern legislation, in this regard, has been tested, and the pernicious consequences are evident. Indeed, a great and true statesman would have foreseen these direful results, and would have prevented them by maintaining the law of God. He would know from history that the abuses of marriage life are unerring signs of a nation's decay, and his own judgment would declare that total divorce is foremost among those abuses. His sagacity, then, would induce him to exert all his influence against any legislation favoring

divorce ; and his love of country would urge him to educate his fellow citizens to condemn and abhor an abuse so ruinous to their country's welfare. This is true patriotism ; for love of one's country inflames the patriot with a desire to perpetuate his country's strength, its morality, and its religion. Patriotism does not only consist in braving the terrors of the battle-field, but also in promoting the growth and endurance of the nation. A sturdy nation will overcome in time the failure of its military forces ; but it cannot endure if the life of the nation is destroyed by destroying the sources whence that life springs. To protect the sacredness of marriage is, therefore, the most exalted patriotism ; and it conforms, too, with the will of the Creator. While a nation corresponds to the law of God, its patriotism lives, its vitality is preserved, its greatness increases, and its influence for good is experienced in all parts of the earth.

We have said that divorce is destructive to the family, to the nation, and to civilization. Proofs sufficient are visible to sustain this assertion ; because whatever ruins the family, strikes at the life of the nation and undermines civilization. If, then, you reflect upon the nature of wedlock and its consequences, you must agree that whatever destroys the sacredness and indissolubility of marriage, scatters the members of the family, exposes them to temptation, annihilates parental and filial affections, breaks down the barriers against vice and crime, breeds corruption and immorality, and expels the religious sentiments of the heart. When the parents are not united by the inseverable bonds of affection and religion, will the parents love their children, or the children love their parents ? Grant to such parents a bill of divorce, and what becomes of the

children? The parents have been setting a ruinous example. They hate each other; they have formed unholy alliances with others; and from these alliances evolve anger, quarrelling, unchaste conduct, scandalous press reports, and finally divorce or murder. What is the effect of all this on the parents themselves and upon their children? Is this the moral and religious aspect of marriage life which brings peace to the family, Christian education to the children, and stability to the nation? No; such conduct banishes peace, disperses the children, and hews down the pillars of the state.

Divorce law, as it now exists in our land, is one of the most demoralizing evils of our age. Wife or husband can fabricate some excuse, and a bill of divorce is granted. If there is wealth to support the application, no difficulty in procuring the bill need be apprehended. If one resists the granting of the bill, the resistance is in vain; for money can achieve in our courts almost what it demands, and the innocent party must endure the wrong which he or she is unable to prevent. But even if neither party is innocent, a total separation should not be granted. Yet divorce is easily obtained, and thousands are granted every year, notwithstanding the teachings of our Saviour, Who says: "*Whosoever shall put away his wife and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And, if the wife shall put away her husband and be married to another, she committeth adultery.*" (Mark x.—11 and 12). But our legislation decrees otherwise. It assumes the position and prerogatives of Almighty God, ignores the command of God and the teachings of the Sacred Scriptures, and grants license to the wayward to lead shameful, sinful lives. This kind of legislation indicates how little regard is now

entertained for the Bible, directs attention to the low state of morality, and bespeaks the indifference of law-makers for the chastity and stability of society. Such legislators are traitors to their country's weal. Their laws will give birth to disasters in comparison with which invading armies are harmless things. The results of this sort of legislation are already partially seen in the horde of tramps who infest the country, begging by day and robbing by night. Jails and reformatories and penitentiaries are crowded by inmates who, generally speaking, were cast upon the waves of life at an early age. Let this predicament continue for a century—each year bringing forth new recruits and increasing in geometrical ratio—and you will have mobs in every town and city, which in a time of civil and political disturbance will produce scenes as bloody and as horrible as Paris ever witnessed during the Reign of Terror.

These unfortunate children are punished for violations of law, which could be shunned, had the children's parents lived as a Christian husband and wife should. The parents are separated by divorce and the children's existence thrown among the vicious and corrupting. The consequences are not hard to perceive. They imbibe the degenerate spirit of their environments and develop into pests of society. Talk with them, and you will discover that in most cases the poison was inoculated in early life. Their Christian education was neglected, but an education of deviltry was imparted and readily acquired. They knew no school except the school of vice and sin. They had no training except that which rogues and drunkards bestow. They had no parents except those who despised the Divine Law, hated virtue, and wooed licentiousness. These children are doomed

to a life of wretchedness ; but the cause of their depravity should be sought in the recklessness of their parents, and in the laws of divorce. Still, the number of divorces is amazingly multiplying, and with almost every divorce case some children lose their homes and are made wanderers on the face of the earth. If this is wisdom in legislation, then we know not what you call crime. These would-be Solons and Lycurguses wish us to understand that they legislate for the welfare of the state ; but, in fact, their divorce laws are fraught with disorder, vast expense, and ruin.

It may be said that these persons cannot live happily together, and, therefore, separation is indispensable to peace. Very well ; let them separate, but forbid them to marry again. This method will obviate the difficulty suggested ; and what is more, there will not be so many partial divorces as there are now total divorces. The husband will not then be squandering his affection on some bewitching damsel who seeks the destruction of his home ; nor will the wife be showering smiles and endearments upon some galvanized devil whom, by some fatality, she imagines she loves more than her own husband. This propensity to evil will be destroyed, and with it the fruitful handmaid of divorce.

But some will maintain that this partial divorce cannot compensate the innocent party. It cannot be denied but that often only one, either the husband or wife, is guilty ; therefore to restrain the innocent party from remarrying, would be inflicting punishment on innocence. It must be conceded, in the first place, in refutation of this argument, that God, the Creator and Preserver of all things, still rules, and His laws still are in force. His edict on this matter is : "*What, therefore, God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.*"

This is the mandate of heaven, and it is superior to all human legislation and all human arguments. In the second place, you are compelled to admit that the particular grievance of an individual is more than compensated by the general good obtained from a strict observance of the Divine Law. Listen to what St. Augustine, a great Doctor of the Church, has to say on this subject: "This excellence of matrimony is threefold: faithfulness, offspring, the sacrament. In faithfulness it is required that neither act in violation of the marriage tie; in the offspring, that it is received in love, fed with kindness, educated religiously; and in the sacrament, that the wedlock be not dissolved, and that neither, if divorced, be united to another." To this view of matrimony all men of thought will subscribe, because it has its sanction and is based upon the decree of the Eternal Lawgiver. It protects the child, instructs the parents, respects the sacredness of the sacrament, and secures for the state a healthy, well-trained population.

Moreover, are not Catholics as happy and contented in wedded life, though they abide by the law, as others who are restless and seeking for new affections and new alliances. The few Catholics who seek for a divorce afford one of the best arguments for the indissolubility of marriage; for these few are known by their scandalous lives. In fact, who are those, as a rule, who apply for a divorce? Are they not noted for sinful sensations? Do they live Christian lives? Is their conduct edifying? They may desire notoriety; but such notoriety a faithful Christian and a good citizen would detest. Again, when married parties understand they cannot obtain a divorce with the privilege of remarrying, they will avoid those tempta-

tions which cause so much ruin ; they will accommodate themselves to the failings of their mates ; they will bear each other's burdens ; they will entreat God's assistance in the battles of life ; and be the nobler, the better, the happier for never dreaming of a divorce. Where there is no divorce the children will be trained to love and serve God; they will not be exposed to the wiles of the street nor to the scandalous example of bad, unchaste parents ; but will be educated in good schools, trained by the elevating influences of a pure home, will be devout Christians, and sober, intelligent, honest citizens. In this manner they will not only be useful, energetic members of society, but will also be complying with the will of God and storing up treasures in heaven.

When Catholics are about to enter into this holy state of matrimony, let them prepare by prayer and the reception of the Sacraments of Penance and the Holy Eucharist ; let them approach this state of life aware of its responsibilities ; let them be in sanctifying grace when they plight their vows to be faithful on that journey which ends only at the grave. By this Christian preparation they will merit the benediction of heaven ; and by being thus docile children of the Church, they will ever derive consolation from the purity of their intention and the rectitude of their motives. On account of their compliance with the will of their Saviour, He will comfort them in their trials, will wipe away the tears of grief, and turn their sorrows into joys.

SECOND SERMON.

Jesus also was invited and His disciples to the marriage. (St. John ii —2.)

On Scandalous Matrimonial Alliances.

My Dear Brethren: This invitation to Jesus, His Mother, and the disciples to attend the nuptial feast at Cana, appears indeed to be providential. Jesus came on earth to teach mankind what things are beneficial for its welfare on earth and necessary for its eternal happiness. He therefore accepts the invitation, and by His presence imparts dignity and sacredness to the feast. He does more than this; for He teaches thereby the sacred respect due to the Sacrament of Matrimony. By His appearance at the marriage He impresses upon the mind of every Christian the high esteem which Heaven deigns to bestow upon those who, in a Christian manner, enter into the marriage state. He teaches the sanctity of wedded life, the gravity of this sacred contract, the careful and pious considerations which should precede every nuptial feast. Would that every Catholic weighed prudently the sacredness of this sacrament!

In the Old Law marriage was a solemn contract among the Jews. Our Saviour gave it the seal of His approbation, infused divine grace into it, and made it a sacrament. This sacrament gives grace to the recipients, if they worthily receive it, to bear the anxieties and troubles of marriage life; to train their children to

observe and obey the laws of God ; to live together in holy wedlock until the end of life. There must be no thought of divorce for the purpose of forming new matrimonial alliances. There must be no squandering of nuptial affections upon another. Each must live for the other until the Angel of Death will sever what God has joined together. Marriage is indissoluble,—"*What, therefore, God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.*" (St. Mark x.—9.)

In our age, how many disregard this divine injunction. The divorce courts are busy annuling the work of God. The spirit of Christianity is being displaced by the spirit of lawlessness. The pernicious decrees of civil legislatures censure the mandate of heaven and despise the Eternal Lawgiver. Man pretends to know what conduces more to the healthy perpetuity of society, than the Creator of the human race. Jesus, the Saviour of society, says: "*What, therefore, God hath joined together, let no man put asunder ;*" but our legislative assemblies and our courts ignore the will of heaven, and ruthlessly rend asunder, or rather attempt to rend asunder, the matrimonial contract. In this age of progress very few things are so progressive as the divorce courts. The destructive effects of this inconstancy are visible in society ; but the future will develop the cancer in a more alarming degree. If its effects are now seen in the reformatories and jails of our land, what will accommodate the ruffians of society in the new century ?

Much of the cause of this social disturbance is to be sought and found in the madness with which some form matrimonial alliances. They do not consult God. They do not pray to Him for guidance. Why, they are about as ignorant of God as the untutored savage.

Speak to them of the necessity of consulting God, and they smile at your credulity. They think you belong to some age long since passed. But it is this very recklessness which has cursed society in former times, and undoubtedly will bring retribution again. Rashness collects the fuel which devastates nations. The violation of God's law will not go unpunished.

Now it appears to me that thus far you agree with me. If you do, what then must you think of Catholics who spurn God's law by entering the marriage state in an un-Catholic manner. They despise the teachings of their Church ; they contemn Almighty God ; they bring disgrace upon themselves and institute a destructive example. They know better ; but all the pious exhortations of early life, every Christian lesson ever learned, every affectionate tie of kindred is swept aside by the irresistible current of their uncontrolled passions. They enter into the contract of matrimony before a squire. By this madness they debase themselves ; they belittle themselves in the eyes of all judicious people. Protestants who have any regard for themselves would not dream of subjecting themselves to such debasement. The Catholic who acts thus, has a very puny estimate of himself or herself; and still I think that such regard themselves at their full value ; for in my estimation, in the estimation of all prudent, God-fearing people, they are not worth very much.

But, let me ask them would they take their children to a squire to have them baptized ? If they were sick, would they send for the squire to administer to them the Last Sacrament of the Church ? Awful insult ! they would retort. Yet, is not matrimony a sacrament just as well as baptism or extreme unction ? If it is so preposterous to have a justice of the peace perform

the rites of the other sacraments, what excuse can they offer for going to him in the case of the Sacrament of Matrimony? If it is an outrageous offense in the one case, is it not as outrageous in the other? And what seems so very strange in the matter, is that rarely does a Catholic young man stoop to such debasement. It is usually a Catholic girl who has so little respect for herself and so little regard for the sacredness of this sacrament.

Now, observe this Catholic maiden as she stands before a justice of the peace to plight her vow. The bridegroom is of some sect or another, we suppose. There they stand. The squire officiates in the capacity which an unwise law bestows upon him. The contracting parties give utterance to a pledge which makes them man and wife. The cold formality is ended; and the Catholic maiden has dishonored herself, spurned the law of her Church, heaped disgrace upon her family, and created a nefarious example! When she spoke the words which made her a wife, by that very expression she manifested her madness; her headlong determination to follow the bent of her un-Catholic propensities! By the rude romantic she may be termed a heroine; but her heroism is rashness, her conduct disgraceful, her boldness appalling! A devout Catholic would shrink from the thought of giving such scandal; would pray that ere such calamity befell her, the grave would receive her lifeless form into its repulsive embrace. Would that her guardian angel had accosted this wilful girl ere she took the final step which must generate misery for her! Yea, her good angel assuredly pleaded with her often, begged of her to listen, urged her to think of the past,—of the time she made her first confession; of that happy morning when she received the

Saviour for the first time in Holy Communion! Many an endearing scene was awakened by her guardian angel. Even her madness was contrasted with her innocence when she knelt alone in prayer, a younger but a wiser girl. The sorrow of her parents arising from so deplorable event; the estrangement from God; the insult to her Church, of which she was once a pious child,—all these and more, too, indeed, were depicted to her soul. She would not hearken to the remonstrances of her good angel, and reluctantly he withdrew, at the threshold of that office, from one with whom he could no longer abide. Is this not a spectacle to make her angel weep; to cause every good Catholic to lament; to bow her pastor's head in grief; to render her parents frantic? Pause, then, I say to you, before you ever imitate so awful an example! Nay; rather avoid the company which could tempt you to such dishonor and to such wretchedness!

Consider now the praiseworthy spirit of good Catholics. They notify their pastor in time. An announcement of their approaching marriage is made in their parish church. A day is appointed for the nuptial feast. On that day they prepare themselves for a devout reception of the Sacrament of Matrimony; they go to confession. In the Tribunal of Penance the grace of Jesus sanctifies their souls. They are united in marriage with the flower of innocence in their hearts and the blessings of the Church upon their heads. A nuptial Mass is celebrated, and in this Mass they invite Jesus and His Mother and the disciples to their feast. In this Mass they receive Jesus into their hearts, to bless them, to sanctify them, and to crown their festivities by His adorable presence. During this Mass how many an ardent prayer is whispered to heaven by

the contracting parties! How they besiege the throne of God with their fervent appeals for divine grace, for His approval, for His blessing! What thoughts arise in those two hearts! What expectancy for the future! What anxiety, what hope, what faith! For weeks, for months they have prayed that God may counsel them; that He may ward off every danger in the future; that He may send His angel of peace to dwell with them. Noble, Christian aspirations have filled their souls and directed them to this new state of life. At the nuptial Mass friends are present, praying for them. Many a pious emotion arises from friendly hearts to heaven for them. Their marriage is a Catholic marriage; surely Jesus is present at their feast.

Contrast the cold, barren, un-Catholic union before a squire and this edifying, solemn, Christian wedding, and draw your own inferences. To me the former appears a mockery of a sacred thing; the latter elevating, grand, and impressive, with the impressiveness and grandeur of religion and the sanction of heaven. The marriage vows are ratified in heaven, and the benedictions of the Church go with them into the perilous, unknown future.

For her who becomes a wife by the authority of a justice of the peace, what joy can her wedding day ever bring her? When memory reverts to that occasion, what holy aspiration can arise from that scene, to mellow her declining years? In sickness and in adversity, in sorrow and in doubt, what ennobling sustenance can spring from the recollections of that deplorable event? None—none can come as guardian angels to bid her hope; none to console her troubled heart; none to soothe the sight of grief, disappointment, and remorse.

Yea, but the Catholic who is married according to the will of God can ever draw consolation and joy from her nuptial feast. The memory of that happy day will dispel many a cloud of sorrow, will banish from the heart many a grief. That happy day, like a perennial spring, will, in all the vicissitudes of life, give joy and solace. In trouble she can look back on that day, and from its memories cull the flower of peace. In every success or disappointment there is a joy in the remembrance of that glorious morning when she invited, with pure heart, Jesus to her nuptial feast. Will that same Saviour abandon her to affliction who put her young trust in Him? Will He be unmindful of her supplications in the hours of gloom or dismay? No; surely her divine Nuptial Guest will ever be her friend.

Then I would say to you, were you contemplating matrimony, to prepare for that feast as devout Catholics should. Ask God to direct you in the choice of partners for life. Enter that holy state in peace with your God and with honor to yourselves. Let that day be one of joy and peace. Do not mar it with anything which would dimmer the luster and the beauty and the holiness of its memories!

THIRD SERMON.

Be not wise in your own conceit. (St. Paul to the Romans, xii.—16.)

The Perniciousness of Conceit.

My Dear Brethren: In this chapter St. Paul imparts many lessons of wisdom, which it is profitable for us to consider carefully. Since it is impossible, however, to meditate upon them all this morning, let us select one from this chapter of profound Christian thought. A very beneficial topic for reflection is contained in the closing sentence of to-day's epistle—"*Be not wise in your own conceit.*" This is a lesson which every one of us should take to heart and remember as long as we live; nor should we only simply remember it, but we should examine ourselves that we may know whether we are dupes or not, of this injurious folly. Like many another fault of which we are possessed without our knowing it, we may be slaves of conceit and still be ignorant that our manner is so deformed and our judgment so defective. Indeed, the excessively conceited person puts high value upon himself, and his manner and his judgment are not only the standard for him, but should be for all others. Probably he is not aware of his conceit, and would be angry were you to tell him of this weakness. Truly the poet has spoken wisely:

> "To see oursels as others see us,
> It wad frae mony a blunder free us,
> And foolish notion."—(Burns.)

Conceit cannot be ascribed exclusively to any particular grade of society. It is seen sometimes among the wealthy, sometimes among the lowly. It is found among those who are plodding along the avenues of science ; and also it is no stranger to those who pursue an opposite course. This nevertheless is true, that the scholar is never conceited. Erudition and conceit are enemies. One displaces the other. They are not friends ; they never were, nor will they ever be. Indeed, the same can be said of a possessor of great wealth acquired by himself. He never could have gathered so many shekels had he wasted as much time in airing nonsense as the conceited do. He was necessarily industrious, and industry is a foe of conceit. It is not those distinguished for great powers of the body and mind who are victims of this malady. It is the superficial, the vain, the proud, who fancy they are perfection because they possess some wealth ; that they are models because they have some, or imagine they have some, physical superiority ; that they are geniuses because they have achieved some little notoriety within a small circle of sycophants. Wherever conceit parades itself, there is not much true greatness. Insignificant wealth and noticeably inferior talent may amuse themselves by trying to impose their self-created importance upon you ; but able men and women have no time for such nonsense. Industrious wealth is sober and genius is humble. Conceit is ever telling of its efforts, of its successes, of its conquests. Nor are these victories usually to be found in the path of Christian virtue, but down the steep ways of sin.

Let us now, my Christian friends, consider some obstacles presented by conceit to temporal and spiritual advancement. But let me suggest that you do not

allow yourselves to confound self-respect, confidence, or laudable ambition with conceit. A moment's reflection will show us that conceit has a different visage and a different manner from those. Self-respect protects you from slums, rowdies, and roguery. It should also impel to industry and honor. Self-confidence is the ballast of the soul, and without it a person, though he may possess great parts, is unstable, tremulous, and poorly equipped for the storms of life. Finally, ambition is the fuel of the soul and must be regulated. Mad ambition, like a conflagration, fiercely consumes until it burns itself out ; but moderate, honest ambition tempers the soul as the forgeman does the steel. These are not the whimsical, airy, boastful evaporations of conceit. They are made of stern stuff, and impart honesty, activity, and enterprise. Conceit is the offspring of an undiscerning mind ; it is nourished by vanity and stimulated by pride.

In the affairs of life, it is evident that conceit is an insurmountable barrier to advancement. The excessively conceited person closes his eyes to the attainments of the great in other ages, and considers that there is not, at the present, anything deserving of his notice which he does not understand. Many of the grandest achievements of mighty minds are to him only follies or whims of overestimated ability. Often he ignores the past ; but dotes upon the vanities of the present age. Everything of great worth in any age he does not appreciate, while he frequently extols the insignificant, the erroneous, and the exaggerated. At all events, everything colliding with his views are inferior or nonsensical. Failing to weigh with care the persons and things around him, he never ascends to those great heights to which others attained by incessant toil and

comprehensive, humble thought. He knows how to make money better than anyone else, still he never amasses a fortune ; he is a more profound thinker than Copernicus or Newton, yet he never gives to the world any astounding discoveries ; he grasps in his ponderous cranium every other body's business, but neglects his own. There is not anything about which he is not conversant, and he is ever ready to talk infallibly upon all subjects. He knows everything—except to know himself, to know how to learn, and to know how to estimate others fairly.

It is not difficult to see that such a person is weak and will never make any progress until he begins to examine himself and appreciate the sterling worth of his contemporaries, together with the instructive lives of those admirable prodigies of ages now dead. In the student, scientist, historian, and philosopher, conceit can have no place, if these would arrive at pre-eminence. It is only little minds which are conceited. This is not only true of those who trudge up the steep to the shrine of literary knowledge, but also of those who labor in the common avenues of life. Conceit is detrimental to everyone and beneficial to no one. In a man laying claim to literary distinction, it is obnoxious. It blinds his judgment, makes his criticism a farce, offends others by his vanities, and helps not himself. His conceit not only retards his researches, but prevents them ; for he does not see anything worthy of his investigation which he has not already grappled. Such a person will never attain to pre-eminence as long as he remains inflated with his own importance. The same is true of the mechanic, farmer, or business man. Conceit is not found in the highways of prosperity. Arduous, unremitting toil is what earns distinction and

profit. Nor should partial success; nay, even the most consummate success should not induce anyone to glory in the achievements of intellect or muscle. Others with the same resources might have accomplished greater things. The consciousness of labor well done, of efforts well directed, with their attending success, is commendable; but this is not conceit, nor is such consciousness boastful of its triumphs. Indeed, vast ability is ever humble, and appears not to realize its own greatness. Probably it is too busy or too modest to pay much attention to itself.

You have undoubtedly observed that conceit is generally expressive of the lack of experience. The one who enters the contest in any sphere of human endeavor, will, if he remain therein, be cured of his fanciful boastings. In the struggle the conceited will go down—only the sturdy will survive. For a time he may make some display; but in the tussle of endurance you will discover him a braggart. We have intimated that conceit is more often found in the inexperienced than in those who have contested in the gladitorial struggle for their daily bread. Youth is more conceited than matured manhood. It has its follies, and it thinks these are wisdom. A son or daughter in early life sometimes imagines that his or her parents know nothing; but when these young persons reach fifty, they consider their parents were very wise. If they profit by the experience of their parents, they will escape many of the perplexing obstacles encountered by the foolish. In early life the son would say that the father was behind the times and the daughter would indicate what she termed the whims and severity and care of the mother. Age convinces both son and daughter of the wisdom of their parents; and

that son or daughter is wise and not conceited who learns from the experience of others.

Now, it must be quite evident to you that conceit does not obstruct more the avenues of temporal prosperity than it impedes spiritual progress. The Holy Bible in no place commends conceit ; but, on the contrary, condemns and rebukes the conceited. "*Hast thou seen a man wise in his own conceits?*" says the Book of Proverbs (xxvi.—12), "*there shall be more hope for a fool than for him.*"

The conceited are thus severely censured by the Inspired Writer ; and it follows that there must be a reason for such a scathing condemnation. If you search for the reason, you will easily enough discern it. You will observe that conceit is antagonistic to piety ; for it prevents growth in holiness, and between it and Christian perfection there is no reconciliation. Conceit harbors not Christian virtue, but considers virtue the compliment of weak minds. If you seek for the guardian angel of Christian virtue, you must go to humility. This is the queen of Christian effort, and conducts you successfully from the marvellous existence of the smallest atom of matter to the God of all this wondrous creation. But conceit knows more than all the virtues can impart, and in its excesses crys out : "There is no God."

Is it not conceit which prompts the agnostic to declare he will not believe anything except what he can analyze in the laboratory of his own poor brain ? Is it not conceit which renders the atheist so foolish as to say : "There is no God" ? It cannot be denied but that it is the bombast soul of conceit which nerves them to make such awful assertions. Were the agnostic depending alone upon his own powers of body and mind to unveil the secrets and mysteries of nature, his knowledge

would be circumscribed to pitiful limitations. Of the consequences of things he may have some cognition ; of things and their causes he is as helpless as a child. He is a vain, arrogant, conceited dictator who has grasped all the knowledge of the sum of things and reduced them to their last analysis ! He is as shallow as he is pompous. He is remarkably profound when he treats of, " the warfare between Science and Religion," and imagines that sane people will accept the vapors of his muddy brain for the deductions of true scientific research. He boasts of his independence of thought, while his weak intellect is baffled by the smallest things around him. He would not be hampered by an acknowledgment of God's existence or by belief in the divine Revelation to man. Yet without these he could not know his own origin or destiny, and without belief in them he makes a fool of himself. With all his grand mental acquisitions he is unable to explain the intercourse between his glib tongue and that wonderful forge in which his ponderous thoughts are fashioned.

You perceive that the agnostic and atheist are in a very sad condition ; for the former admits he does not know what he is talking about, while the latter has no knowledge of what he is talking about. Agnosticism means ignorance ; and no one can talk about that of which he has no knowledge. The atheist says there is no God, and consequently no divine Revelation. He talks fluently about that which in his estimation has no existence ; and therefore makes a fool of himself in talking about that which he claims does not exist ; or in other words, he makes a fool of himself in talking about nothing. This is the wisdom of the agnostic and atheist ; and still they think they have a bond and mortgage upon all knowledge. Their wisdom is a most exquisite specimen of conceit. You note they

abuse things of which they profess ignorance, and sneer because they do not understand. They would have us consider them very scholarly while they are making conceited fools out of themselves. Had they as much reason as presumption, they would give themselves the benefit of the doubt ; and with the propensities of true genius endeavor to examine the things at which they now scoff. It is unnecessary to remark that this sort of conceit is an impenetrable barrier to Christian righteousness, and to those grand summits of knowledge from which the Christian scientist has caught glimpses of the world beyond.

Without entering into any consideration of other Christians, we are compelled to admit that some Catholics are tainted with the foolishness of conceit. In presumptuousness they misjudge. Conceit so raises them above themselves that everything is out of gear which does not harmonize with their views. Sometimes you will hear a few Catholics comment about the pastor or other priest. He is not fashioned according to the mould of their imagination. He is too social or he is too reticent. He is too severe or he is too lenient. He is not pious enough or he is an unpardonable ascetic. He does not preach or he preaches too much. He is not eloquent, nor is he accomplished or graceful. The Church is not what she ought to be. She is illiberal, unprogressive, and too exacting ; or she makes too many concessions, is too elaborate in her ceremonies, and too lax in her labors. Thus conceit talks, but its emptiness is so well known that it does no harm. Such Catholics should begin by studying themselves. This study may reveal to them that their conceited carping is as ridiculous as it is unwarranted. This study may, too, unfold for them the beauty, sublimity, and erudition of their Church.

Again, you may hear a Catholic boast: "Oh, I don't go to Mass on Sunday. I don't believe in running to church so often; I don't go; still I am as good as those who do go. And then, this thing of going to the sacraments so often—I don't see any use in it. I haven't received the sacraments in five years, and I haven't been at Mass in I-don't-know-how-long a time; yet I am just as good as these very pious church-goers and prosper much better. They only go to show themselves. A good deal of it is sham. I believe in the practical man, in the everyday man." No doubt you have heard such lingo from a person who was a great admirer of himself. If that person, since he is so good without going to church, would go to church, he would be one of the greatest saints, his example would be most fruitful, and his memory would be handed down from generation to generation. Let, however, this boastful person be attacked by sickness, and see how quickly his conceit disappears. Then he must have a priest; then he wants a world of attention; and if he die, why he must have a grand funeral, and the Church which he ignored must lavish favors upon him. In the grasp of malignant disease all the conceited bombast has departed, and in the presence of death he acknowledges how little and how weak is man.

There is, moreover, a national conceit which is as injurious to nations as individual conceit is to individuals. Nations thus demented imagine that all other peoples are unprogressive and uncivilized. Like conceited individuals, they know not of what they speak. They boast of their civilization and persuade themselves they are messengers delegated by heaven to carry civilization to others. Experience demonstrates, however, that their civilization is the torch and the

maxim gun, impoverishment and destruction. They boast of their noble purposes, of their ability to promote peace and happiness, of their plan of "benevolent assimilation"; but their purposes inflict ruin, their promised peace and happiness are devastation and wretchedness, and their benevolent assimilation consists in filling graves with mangled human bodies. For ourselves, conceit has blinded us so completely that we now ignore the principles for which our forefathers bled, and upon which our right to independence was based. Nay, more; we have despised the sagacious counsels of Washington, and appear to outlive the Constitution. If such conceited rashness is not stayed by the wisdom of true patriots, the nation will reap the "forbidden fruit" of conceit.

Let us then, my Christian friends, carefully contemplate the advice of St. Paul, "*Be not wise in your own conceit.*" Wisdom rejects it and Almighty God condemns such foolishness. It is a barrier to advancement, a foe to piety, the ruin of national honor, and the destroyer of national memories. It never made a saint, a martyr, a wise man, or a scholar. It has no place in the halls of learning nor in the legislative assemblies of a nation. Since it is never an element of scholarship, but always a barrier to great acquirements; since it is never found in the saints, but is ever an insurmountable obstacle to sanctity; since it is never seen in the wise man, but in the fool; since it never promotes virtue, but often encourages vice,—had we better not avoid it and its influence? Let us, then, invoke the Spirit of Wisdom that we may be wise, but not in our own conceit; that we may not imagine we are wise when we are foolish, so that He may impart to us that true wisdom which conducts to heaven.

SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY.

And every one that striveth for the mastery refraineth himself from all things: and they indeed that they may receive a corruptible crown: but we an incorruptible one. (St. Paul 1, Ep., Cor. ix.—25.)

The Christian's Crown.

My Dear Brethren: In the epistle just read for you St. Paul tells how the contestants struggle in the race for a corruptible crown. This is also true in our day. Trials of strength, endurance, and agility take place, and are encouraged by friends of such contests. In ancient times the games were an attractive feature of their holidays. For many they constituted the only attraction. Great enthusiasm was manifested; and the victor received not only a crown, but the applause and esteem of the populace. Feats of marvellous athletic skill and power have won, in every age, universal approbation. This is as it should be. Healthy exercise, giving vigor and symmetry to the human body, ought to be encouraged. Moreover, the preparation made by athletes—their training, care, and self-restraint—is commendable. They exercise vigorously, they refrain from everything which may impede their success, they study to acquire skill, patience, and endurance, that they may wear the crown of victor. It is this which stimulates them in their laborious training, and spurs them forward in the race, and nerves their hearts with

unyielding determination. The glory of great achievement and the honor of a crown are the grand objects of every effort. But not every one who runs, wins; and not every one who enters any contest, carries off the laurels of conquest. Some fail, and their failure is a thorny crown. They hear the applause which greets the victor, but this is a scourge to their already bruised feelings. How different with a true Catholic! His temporal failure is triumph, his defeat a crown! For his failures and defeats are offered to God and borne with Christian resignation.

In the great race of human rivalry, there is more grounds for hope than in athletic competition; for though only a few can acquire the first prizes in the world of contest, still every one will get some reward. It must be admitted, nevertheless, that many are not compensated in proportion to their efforts. The worthy are often set aside, and the undeserving are elevated to a rank which their own merits could never win. This is unjust; but justice is a stranger to many in our age. Still, even those who are advanced without merit, and those who win by tireless effort, only receive a perishable crown. It amuses them for a few days, and then falls forever from the aching temples which ofttimes throbbed with pain in its pursuit. It is transitory; and no sooner has it decked their brow than it must be exchanged for the shroud. In one race, however, all may win and should win. This is the race for heaven. In this contest some may surpass others, thus obtaining a greater reward; but every one will be compensated according to his merit. There will be no injustice, no cliques, no "rings" to forward the unworthy or oppress or crush the deserving. Justice will bestow the prizes, and the prizes are eternal. It is of these prizes, the in-

corruptible crowns, that St. Paul speaks to the Corinthians. This is the sort of a crown he wished to see upon the brow of the early Christian ; this is the sort of a crown Almighty God wishes to see upon the brow of everyone of us at the Last Day ! This is the Christian crown—the crown fashioned by God's grace and good works—the crown which will sparkle in the Kingdom of God when all mundane glories will have decayed !

To the acquisition of this imperishable crown, there is nothing incompatible to be found in an honest struggle for temporal greatness. Indeed, the struggle for one should nerve us for the other. They should be co-operative, and are in the management of a great man's life. Just as a child who now reads a primer may become a celebrated scholar, and the peasant boy may accumulate vast opulence, so a devout Catholic may attain to noble distinction in the avenues of great effort, and at the same time be making his heavenly crown. There is nothing antagonistic between godliness and honest toil. In fact, every Catholic should strive to acquire as much honorable distinction in mundane affairs as he can. He ought not to be a laggard in the race, but should compete manfully with his fellow citizens in all worthy pursuits. He can weigh a subject as thoroughly as others ; his judgment is as safe a guide ; his energies as strong ; his will as unchangeable ;—in a word, he is as well equipped physically and mentally as any others. He ought, therefore, be as successful as any others. Besides, the fruit of his honorable success will not only elevate himself, but his influence will be helpful to others struggling in the race of life. He will be their model. His honest achievements will animate others. His energy, sobriety, and honesty will be noted and imitated by many another. In this manner a great-

souled Catholic contends in the race, and his efforts are fashioning for him an incorruptible crown. Ah, were more Christians to wear the crown of probity and earnest application in this life, how much more greatness of heart and soul would enrich society! How much more certain would many be of wearing the imperishable crown in the Kingdom of God!

But you may tell me religion is not seldom a barrier to a Catholic's promotion. Yes, I concede this point. Some discriminate against a Catholic; but this usually occurs where some "dirty work" is to be done, to the accomplishment of which no honorable Catholic stoops. They cannot trust a Catholic in such cases; and therefore they select one who has an armor-plated conscience. In affairs of great moment and where probity is required, an honest Catholic is trusted and admired. If prejudice sometimes antagonizes him, especially at the ballot-box, he must be patient. Such obstacles mould his character and enrich his incorruptible crown. You must not expect to find your way in life strewn with flowers instead of thorns. The flowers might allure you from God; the thorns draw you more intimately to Him. Besides, as a rule, these obstructions which are cast in your way on account of the faith you profess, can be diminished by noble, persevering effort. This effort will give you skill, broaden your views, strengthen your endurance, and make you greater and better. It will teach you, moreover, not to be too hasty in making distinctions in respect to the faith of others. Prove, then, that you possess the capabilities required; prove that you know no discouragement; prove that you have entered the race to win; and your qualifications must be acknowledged! Some persons maintain it is their religion which impedes their pro-

gress, when in truth it is their inertness. But whether you remain in those occupations of life in which the majority are engaged ; or whether you be among the few who reach the citadel in which illustrious reputations are acquired,—you must toil, toil in the race. Some earn their bread by the sweat of their brow ; others by the aches of their heart and the worry of their soul. All is not peace which appears so.

Still others will say : " How many rise to greatness by means of trickery and deception ! In our day an honest man cannot succeed. You must be in the 'ring.' You must barter honor for promotion. You must forge your promises and proposals, as some artists fashion their wares, to please the buyers. A Catholic should not deal in such knavery ? Well, then, there is nothing left him but to mourn the death of his aspirations." To this permit me to reply by saying that you hold deception wins more than honesty. It is true, no doubt, that some reach the goal of amazing prosperity over the bridge of deception and knavery ; still, we maintain that anyone who has won the bays of great enterprise and retained his reputation permanently, did it not by knavery. Trickery may win for a time, but its career is brief ; and what is won by deception is lost in disgrace. No ; if you cannot advance under the shield of integrity and by the lamp of honor and by the weapons of industry, better far that you withdraw from the contest. There is no incorruptible crown received from the hand of deception ; and the corruptible one earned in so base a manner is not worth the wearing.

Again, you must remember that you are not created only for temporal eminence, but for heaven. Ponder well that time is short and eternity endless. You will then bear the rebuffs of ill-fortune with greater equan-

imity, and make this earthly struggle subservient to your eternal interests. Make every effort, every disappointment, subserve your one, all-absorbing purpose —heaven. Mark well, nevertheless, that there is no antagonism between industry, enterprise, success, and religion. If any opposition arise, it is not the legitimate consequence, but the offspring of abuse. Catholics most celebrated for temporal acquirements were devout and practical in the things of divine faith. Their memories are enrolled on the scrolls of honor and justice in every nation upon the face of the earth. They are as illustrious for great achievement as they are renowned for their Christian virtues. Their lives and their success must persuade you that industry and progress are not incompatible with religion. The acts of our lives are good or bad, as we make them. They should be good, energetic, and continuous. You should demonstrate that you are not reluctant to enter the contest with all competitors and to demand your rights. Because you are Catholics, you should not be cowards! Nor should you supinely endure every wrong, every injustice, every deprivation of your right! The world has no use for such timidity; but industry, determination, and constancy knock at the barred gates of recognition and obtain a hearing. Yet the struggle ought to be for noble ends, and the ever-actuating purpose should be your incorruptible crown. The efforts of life should be made the rungs of a ladder similar to the one Jacob saw. The angels ascending should be your intentions and your labors; the angels descending will then be blessings from heaven, giving strength, fortitude, and victory. Thus while you are toiling onward to capture the fortress of human reward, you can be building your ladder to the Coronation Halls,

where a just Judge will crown your brow with imperishable glory. To succeed in this it is necessary that the natural virtues of honor, justice, and probity be recasted in the moulds of religion and polished by Christian faith, Christian hope, and Christian charity.

Christian virtue is the pilot of a great man's life, and the harbor which he desires to reach is heaven. Enriched with virtue, he ought to win in temporal and spiritual contests; and from every storm he should come forth a brave, faithful, unconquerable sailor. If at times you meet opposition, you must not be discouraged. Opposition constitutes a considerable portion of everybody's life. If your labors be unrewarded, or if they obtain not favorable recognition, never waste precious time by lamenting your hard luck. Take counsel from the poet:

> "Let us then be up and doing,
> With a heart for any fate;
> Still achieving, still pursuing,
> Learn to labor and to wait."—(Longfellow.)

Your merits will finally be acknowledged; but were they, by some strange combination of circumstances, never to be appreciated by men, remember that God's omniscient eye sees them and will reward them in the realms of His glory. Moreover, the beautiful, admirable, self-consoling virtues of probity, honor, and industry are an inestimable treasure to their possessor. Some may value money, others desire learning; many idolize power and influence; but these are mummies, if not animated by the virtues mentioned; and these virtues alone are sufficient to exalt any person, though he may not wear any insignia of rank or be the recipient of any academic honors! These virtues command and do obtain the approbation

they deserve, while the possessor experiences true delight and satisfaction from their influence upon himself. They are indeed the gems of the soul, the adornment of a great heart, the glory of a true Catholic!

Mark well that the beneficent power of Christian virtues in the individual and upon society does not comprise all their value. While they are the motive power of all enduring achievements, they are also the passport to heaven. Yes, it is heaven itself which gives them strength, patience, effectiveness, and reward. The devout Catholic will incessantly thank God for them; will beseech Him to sustain their fruitfulness in his soul; will be anxious to make the best use of them for his own advancement, his neighbor's good, and the glorification of the Eternal Giver—Almighty God. In this way, what an incorruptible crown will not these virtues win in the contest for a happy immortality! While they stimulate and guide in temporal affairs, they are angels conducting the weary traveler to His God! They soothe the pain which the thorn-bruised feet suffer in the path leading to immortal fame beyond the skies!

Should you at times become discouraged on account of the obstructions which prejudice casts in your way to temporal prosperity, never mind. One thing is necessary. Do the better part. Serve God. Forget not that life is short and human greatness ends at the grave. The memory of the most celebrated fades away as their funeral day commingles with night. The only man who is remembered twenty-four hours after his inanimate dust is lowered into its narrow confines, is a man who has not paid his debts. His creditors will think of him for a time, and may

even curse his existence. You have read in the newspapers during the last few months of the demise of some distinguished men. Now even their memory is almost passed. Nothing remains except what may be contained in the national records and upon their tombstones. There is none now to do them honor. Now they can bestow no favors; and their sycophants are not now mindful or grateful to the ability which lifted them to power. A corpse can confer no favors, and a dead man is a useless man. The death of a great man is like the destruction of a magnificent ship in a storm. There is a contest with the elements. A struggle to escape danger, an awful effort to extricate itself from ruin. Then it settles down into the deep. All who can, forsake it; the storm blows over it, and the winds sing a requiem over its grave. Still, in man there is the soul which rises grandly above the vengeance of destruction and death. The immortal spirit outlives the blow of death, and the distinguishing virtues of honor, probity, and faithfulness survive the human shipwreck. The noble deeds of a great-hearted Catholic will be a stimulus and sustenance to many a young man battling with unfairness and opposition. Besides, these virtues will certainly increase the glory of his incorruptible crown. Let us, therefore, put forth every energy, as faithful Catholics, to attain to every honorable distinction within human grasp; but above and beyond every human consideration, let us toil with honor, probity, and fidelity for that imperishable crown whose beauty and splendor never suffers any diminution of eternal glory. It is the reward of fealty to Almighty God, Who has promised it to His faithful servants: "*Be thou faithful until death, and I will give thee the crown of life.*" (Apocal. ii.—10.)

SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY.

He that hath ears to hear let him hear. (St. Luke viii.—8.)

THE NEED OF A KNOWLEDGE OF THE WORD OF GOD.

My Dear Brethren: At first thought the Gospel for to-day, which I have just read, may be somewhat of a surprise to you. It may seem strange to you that Jesus would exhort anyone of the multitude to give ear to His divine words. Might we not reasonably suppose that everyone would listen attentively to every word which passed the portal of His lips. No orator ever spoke more eloquently. None could speak so fervently and instructively to the heart as He Who knew human nature best. To the well disposed the magnetism of His discourses was irresistible, His knowledge of His subject unlimited, His delivery perfect,—all the qualifications of an unequalled orator were united in Him; yet He cries out: "*He that hath ears to hear let him hear.*" You will observe that there is more implied here than simply hearing. The scope of the application of these words embraces a disposition willing to receive divine doctrine, a memory desirous to retain it, and a will determined to obey its demands. Besides, the words of our text applies to greater numbers than those comprised in the multitude that listened to Him on that memorable occasion; for He did not speak for one assemblage of persons,

but for the human race in every age. His doctrine is not confined to one locality or to one people, but extends to every nation and to all people. Hence the command of our Divine Teacher requires attentiveness to His instructions, docility in hearing them, and obedience to them; and these qualifications, on the part of the listener, are circumscribed by no barriers, but pertain to all nations and to all times. The declaration of our Divine Saviour: "*If he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican*" (Math. xviii.—17), includes submission to the teachings and decisions of the Church. Men may hear forever without complying with the doctrine taught. They may hear and then ridicule the word of God. It follows, therefore, that Jesus intended by this expression to impress upon His audience both the necessity of hearing the divine word and of obeying its requirements.

You remember, the Gospel for to-day tells of a sower who sowed his seed, and also describes where the seed fell. The disciples did not understand the parable, and sought an explanation for it from their Divine Master, just as Catholics now seek explanations on controverted subjects from the Church established by that same Divine Master. Our Divine Lord answers them: "*To you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to the rest in parables, that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.* (Luke viii.—10.) Having made this comment, He explains to the disciples the nature of the parable. But you may inquire: "Is this not a marvellous statement which our Divine Saviour makes? He speaks in parables that the Jews may not see or understand the full meaning of His discourse. We are inclined to think He would be most lucid in His speech, that all may easily comprehend His

meaning." My Christian friends, many of the Jews only listened to Him in order to find fault with His instructions, to deride His doctrine, and entrap Him in His speech. In St. Matthew's Gospel our Divine Lord, referring to the Jews, says : "*This people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed ; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and should understand with their hearts, and should be converted and I should heal them.*" (Math. xiii.—15.) You perceive now that the fault was not with our Saviour, but with the Jews. They did not go to hear Him for the purpose of being edified with His instructions or of meditating upon the truth of His doctrine, or of being converted by His benign grace. As a great teacher would do, He told them sufficient in His parable to awaken their attention and to induce them to inquire. How was it that the disciples sought information on the subject which they did not entirely comprehend, and the others of His audience did not ask a single question ? The answer is quite evident. The disciples were desirous to hear the doctrine of Christ expounded ; they were not. No doubt there were present on that occasion some others besides the disciples, who were docile, attentive listeners ; and for these, Jesus said sufficient to arouse a spirit of investigation and to induce them to come to Him again.

You must also keep in mind that Jesus did not speak only for the Jews. His discourses were intended to instruct mankind in every age. In like manner His condemnation of the Jews on account of their obduracy is applicable to many who are not Jews. How many in our own time will not listen to the Church ? They will not inquire, lest they be converted and be healed

by the divine mercy of Almighty God. They will scoff at the Church, deride her doctrine, embarrass her progress ; and as far as it is possible for them, impede her influence. Are there not, moreover, some Catholics who shut their hearts to her teaching, lest they, too, be converted by her salutary warnings and exhortations ? They have ears, but they hear not. They do not even avail themselves of the opportunities given them to hear, lest they become practical in their faith, devout in their attendance at Mass, and edifying in their Christian example. Yes, Jesus spoke to everyone. His sermons are for all—even for the last person who will be born. He spoke for no particular age, but for every age ; He spoke for no particular nation, but for every nation ; He knew no caste, He made no distinction, He came for the salvation of all. His teachings and exhortations apply to everyone. Hence, when He cried out, "*He that hath ears to hear let him hear*," He meant you and me and every other human creature. That cry has gone forth from the lips of Jesus, and continues, and will ever continue to reverberate until the last priest will have for the last time read the Gospel for Sexagesima Sunday !

Though this text is short, it is nevertheless of much importance. It commands every Catholic, in fact everyone, to hear the word of God and preserve it in his heart. Like every precept which uncreated Wisdom gave to mankind, it is of untold value to us. What drives back the billows of infidelity and immorality which threaten the human race in our day, if not the word of God ? With what attention every Catholic should hear that word ! How he should prepare himself by prayer, so that he may understand it correctly, that he may apply it fruitfully, and that it may ever find

a pure and retentive receptacle in his soul! How foolish, nay, how stupidly foolish must that Catholic be who has no relish for the word of God! If he comes to Mass at all, it is not to last Mass. He is afraid the service will be too long. A half hour is enough for him. To hear a sermon in addition to participating in the Adorable Sacrifice is too onerous for one who flatters himself he knows it all. No wonder that the seed of the word of God, sown in his childhood, is parched and dead. He never fertilized it with the dews of true Catholic devotion.

Now, is not such negligence provoking in an age like this, when discussions upon religious topics and science and even infidelity are going on in the workshop, on the sidewalks, in railroad trains—in brief, in every occupation of life? Infidels are misconstruing science and assaulting religion with their erroneous conceptions; non-Catholics are arraying their ablest intellectual forces in the last intrenchments to which they are driven, to assail the Catholic Church. They are making the strongest defense which private judgment can erect, and in the weakness of their position they invoke their favorites in civil power to aid them with their influence, and reinforce them with unjust preferences in legislation. In the presence of such a host, will Catholics be inert? Will they not arm themselves with the weapons of solid knowledge and with the shield of the word of God? At all times he should blush if he were ignorant; but in our age it becomes a crime for a Catholic not to be able to defend himself logically, cogently, and at least with moderate information. But, alas! some Catholics, to show how little they know, will use some vague notions of science to attack Catholic doctrine. In their ignorance they imagine they can

talk as profoundly as Pasteur, Koch, or Virchow ; and to display their cleverness in polemics they are ever ready to explain the warfare between science and religion. It is surprising "how one small head can carry all they know!" This class is usually agitated with difficulties and doubts respecting religion. Why? Because they have in a great measure lost their faith. They are madly contending with turbulent waves of infidelity, which themselves have lashed into fury. They are clinging to the last spar of salvation, ere God permits them to be engulfed in the whirlpool of their own madness. "A little learning is" (for them) "a dangerous thing." Especially when they indulge too freely in dissipation and corrupting company. How is this inconstancy in religion to be obviated, you may ask ? Evidently by reading authorized books of information, by the reception of the sacraments, and by hearing the word of God and complying with its requirements. Obeying the word of God comprises all, because in obeying that word you perform all that is demanded of you, and the grace of God enriches and stabilitates your soul. By a compliance with that word, divine faith is kept ardent in your souls. Catholic sermons always treat of that word. Every priest labors to instruct those placed under his care. He is responsible for them to God ; and, if his discourses do not embrace all the topics upon which you desire information, they inform you on the principal subjects which are of essential importance to the preservation of your faith and to the acquisition of the rewards of that faith here and hereafter. They may also suggest many new thoughts which, if not sufficiently developed by the priest, will awaken a train of meditation and induce you to investigate for yourselves. In this manner the

seed of the word of God will be nourished and cultivated in your hearts, and you will harvest much useful knowledge, beneficial to yourselves and, if opportunities arise, instructive to others.

Be not insensible to the heavenly manna which Jesus bestows in His teachings. The word of God is the manna of the soul ; and just as it happened to the Jews, if this spiritual manna of the word of God is not gathered at the proper time it may never be gathered. Ah! why should not this divine word have influence upon the soul, since it has demonstrated its omnipotence in countless ways. At the dawn of creation Almighty God spoke. From nothing, by His all-powerful word, the universe came forth. His eternal fiat demanded light ; and the sun took up his course as the luminary of day, and the moon as the luminary of night. By the potency of that sacred word the birds of the air, the fishes of the waters, and every other animal was created. Vegetation, smiling under the influence of that word, decorated the surface of the earth. And finally man was created to the image and likeness of that Eternal Being whose word gave existence, symmetry, and beauty to all created things. The laws which He gave to nature in these first days of creation are still heard by nature and still obeyed by every atom of the universe.

Moses and the Prophets and other holy men mentioned in the Old Testament accomplished wonders by the efficacy of that divine word. We may, however, dispense with a rehearsal of those extraordinary works, and turn immediately to the marvellous effects of the word of God, described in the New Testament. By the potency of that word the lame laid aside their crutches ; the lifeless organ of hearing was filled with the dulcet

sounds of nature; the sightless received vision and beheld, in wonderment, the glories of creation; disease of every species obeyed that mandate; Satan acknowledged its power and submitted to its command. Now this same Jesus Whom all nature obeyed must call out to mankind: "*He that hath ears to hear let him hear.*" Every thing obeys except the rational being—man.

Mark also the potency of that word even in this age of doubt and infidelity and lawlessness. An infant is borne to the regenerating fountain of baptism. By the efficacy of the divine word the infant becomes a child of God, an heir to heaven, and is robed in the mantle of innocence. A sinner enters the sacred tribunal of penance. He is shackled by the malice of Satan and his own passions; his heart is pierced with the thorns of sin; he is a prisoner of hell. The divine word of absolution is pronounced; the heart wounds are healed; the garb of purity once more envelops his soul; his bonds are broken and he is free again. He approached confession with a heart crushed by many a woe; he departs with a strong heart and firm resolution. Before he was a slave of Satan, now he is a child of God. Heaven rejoices at his conversion, his friends rejoice, and his own heart beats light with joy: and all this is due to the power and influence of God's word. But behold the wonder of wonders in the August Sacrifice of the Altar! A wonder more overwhelming to our reason than that of the creation of the universe! By the divine word communicated to the priests of the Catholic Church, the simple elements of bread and wine are transubstantiated into the Son of God. Jesus leaves heaven and takes up His abode in our tabernacles. Stupendous manifestation of the efficacy of God's word! At the Consecration every Cath-

olic's intellect bows its acknowledgment, and the angels kneel in adoration before this beneficent Friend of the human race.

Should not, then, every Catholic hear the word of God and cherish it in his heart all the days of his life ? Will it be said that a Catholic, a rational being blessed by so many heavenly favors, is less docile, less obedient than the material world ? Surely not. Pray often, and especially at Mass time, that God may ever assist you to hear His doctrine and to comply with His laws. Never depart from this church without making the resolution to cultivate in your hearts the seed of the word of God. Often say : O Lord ! give eagerness to my ears for Your divine word ; give me an intellect to understand it and a will to perform it, that no one may ever say my ears were deaf to Your precepts or my heart hardened against Your laws !

EASTER SUNDAY.

You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen. (Mark xvi.—6.)

GOD'S LOVE FOR MANKIND.

My Dear Brethren : What a contrast between this Easter Sunday recorded by the Evangelist St. Mark and the dreary Good Friday preceding. On that Good Friday Jesus died as an abject, abandoned criminal ; on Easter Sunday morning He rises triumphantly over death and the malice of His enemies. On that memorable Good Friday afternoon He appealingly cried to His Eternal Father : "*My God ! My God ! why hast Thou forsaken Me !*" but on Easter Sunday morning He bursts through the tomb by His own inherent power.

On Good Friday He expires amid scoffs ; on Easter Sunday He rises emblazoned in His own glory. On Good Friday darkness hung heavy over Jerusalem, nature was disturbed to her centre, and even the dead left their graves to appear to many as an evidence of the stupendous event which had transpired. But what a change came over the heavens and the earth on Easter Sunday ! Limbo rejoiced ; heaven rejoiced ; and what must have been the joy of the early visitants to the tomb when they saw their Saviour had risen according to His own prediction. On that Easter Sunday morn-

ing there was ecstasy and wonderment among that faithful little group. And if the human heart could rejoice in its amazement, what was the rejoicement among the souls in limbo! The love of Jesus was not only infused into the hearts of the living, but was communicated also to the spirits of the righteous dead. On the morning of the resurrection a little band of faithful adherents rejoiced; and every Easter Sunday morning since has been a day of joy, worshipped by all Christians, until this morning, when millions of Catholics the world over kneel in loving gratitude to Jesus. From the hearts of millions go forth the grandest anthems of devotion and thanksgiving.

Now, my Christian friends, we have been considering recently the precepts of Charity: "*Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, with thy whole soul, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.*" God requires that man should love his fellow man and also his Creator. Let us examine this morning whether God loves man. He demands of man his love; let us see whether the love is reciprocated; whether He loves His human creatures; and if so, to what extent.

In the morning of creation, when the Almighty stood upon the threshold of heaven, He beheld that all was void and that darkness covered the vast abyss. "*He sent forth His spirit,*" says the First Chapter of Genesis, "*over the limitless chasm, and creation began.*" Light was made. The various planets took up their motions and assumed their positions according to the will of the Eternal Architect. In His marvelous plan, earth was designed for the habitation of the human race, and to this planet He gave fertility and the faculty of production. Now, I do not say that God created the heavens and

the earth for man, and for man only. He had undoubtedly other purposes in His eternal design. But this is certain, that all these at present are necessary to man's existence, and all contribute to his benefit and delight.

In all this wonderful creation you see the manifestations of God's love for mankind. Still, it is only when you come to consider the creation of man himself, that your admiration grows and grows until it bursts forth in wondering enthusiasm. Behold man, the masterpiece of God's love! See him in his strength and in his beauty; see him in the symmetry of his body and in the powers of his soul, and what a marvelous piece of work is man! Anyone who studies the anatomy of the human body must necessarily ponder upon its astounding formation. I for one never could understand how any person, examining the structure of a human body, and reflecting upon the skilful arrangement of its parts, could be a disbeliever in God. Just study the foot and the hand. Note the extraordinary strength and elasticity combined with symmetry and beauty. Wonderful arrangement of parts which speak to the heart of the great love of God toward man! None but a God could design such a structure! None but a God could execute such a design! But this is only simple when compared with the other more wonderful parts of the human body. Behold the complex, wondrous, yea, mysterious organs of speech! Behold the tongue, that mysterious instrument which converts the thoughts of the intellect into intelligible sound! Man holds converse with his fellow man! Intellect speaks to intellect, and man is dignified by the faculty of speech! Magnificent gift! Incomparable love!

Now, in order that you may the better comprehend

God's love in the creating of man, let me ask of the poorest person in this parish, would you give your two eyes for all these United States with all their wealth? Were a man, having the authority, to approach you and say to you, "I shall give you all the wealth and lands in the United States, but the moment you accept the offer you will become stone blind, and blind you shall remain forever." Would you accept? No! you would recoil in horror from such a monstrous proposition; you would repel his offer as that of a demon. "My God!" you would say, "what a repulsive temptation, to barter my eyes, these precious gifts, for money and lands! Nevermore to see the smile of the heavens! Nevermore to behold the fair face of a friend! Nevermore to drink in with admiring enthusiasm the beauties and the grandeur of nature! No, no; the whole world could not be a single drop in the compensation for my eyes." Such would be your answer to such a preposterous offer. Then pause and see how God loves the very poorest; see His priceless gift; see how richly endowed the beggar even is. And these orbs of light through which the external world shines into the soul, and through which the soul holds communication with all its environment, are the free gifts of God. These are means by which the soul is enriched by the glories of the heaven and the earth. By these the soul acquires knowledge of God's creation; by these science is built up; and from a consideration of these the soul rises in holy contemplation and grateful acknowledgment of God's love. Wonderful organ of sight, you baffle the most profound scientist and confound the greatest skeptic. No one has ever discovered how you hold converse with the soul or how the soul speaks through you. At present you are as perplexing a mystery

as that of the Blessed Trinity, and you are likely to remain such.

It is, however, only when you come to reflect upon the noble part of man, the great faculties of the human soul, that you see the abundance of God's love for you. No wonder when Shakespeare was considering man, that he exclaimed: "What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason, how infinite in faculty! In form and movement how expressed and admirable! In action how like an angel; in comprehension how like a God!" How noble in reason—that reason which elevates human nature above all mundane creation; which soars to God in thought; whence springs the noblest aspirations; which drinks in knowledge, filling the heart and soul with loftiest contemplations. It is the compass of the mind, the regulator of thought, the torch of investigation. A French philosopher of the infidel school, in attempting to dwarf the greatness of man's intellectual powers, and to cast contempt upon the immortality of the soul, said: "Man is but a speck in creation; only a flea when compared with the vast and ponderous planets." Yes, but this flea, if we call him such, can seize these great spheres in the grasp of his intellect! He can actually weigh them, compute their density, measure their velocities, and describe their motions! This flea can invent and build a telescope whereby he can penetrate the secret places of the heavens and discover new wonders. He can harness the dangerous forces of nature, subdue them, and make them his fleety messengers. Wonderful, the powers of the soul! It is not amazing at all that Almighty God seemed to take counsel when He was about to create man. "*Let us make man to our own image and likeness,*" said the Eternal Designer. He impressed man with the seal of intelligence; and

how truly He is in action like an angel ; and in comprehension how like a God !

Look upon the cross if you desire another stupendous proof of God's love for the human race. Abject and abandoned, like a criminal, He dies. The manger and the cross are testimonies of His love ; but since you have been meditating upon the passion during Lent, I do not intend to do more than call your attention to this unparalleled manifestation of God's love. Permit me now to direct your thoughts to another evidence of His love Among the many promises which Jesus gave, was one which evinces His incessant love for man. He declared : "*I shall remain with you forever ;*" and how truthfully is this fulfilled in the sacrament of His love, the Holy Eucharist. There He remains, the consoler of the afflicted, the help of the weak, the hope of saint and sinner ; and there He will remain as long as a priest of the Catholic Church survives the spoliations of time ! How cold and uninviting would be our Church but for His presence. How gloomy was our Church during Good Friday, when He did not reside in our tabernacle. It was like Jerusalem many centuries ago, when Jesus expired on the cross. Darkness hung heavily here in the sanctuary. There was an indescribable lonesomeness which made the heart sad, which filled everything with the silence of death. How fervently the soul wished for Holy Saturday morning, when the sacrifice of Calvary would be again renewed, and the Saviour of mankind would again take up His abode among us in the sacrament of His love. It is He in the tabernacle Who attracts the heart ! It is to visit Him, to pray to Him, to supplicate Him, that Catholics in every land are drawn irresistibly to their church! It is for Him they expose themselves to the rains and storms, to the sun-

mer's heat and the wearisomeness of long journeys on foot! He attracts them with an irresistible power. They kneel to Him. They unveil the sorrows of their hearts to Him; they thank Him for His great love and entreat His protection. How lonely would be our temples but for His august presence!

Supposing now you had a great-hearted friend. In your absence a quarrel arose. Your enemies assailed your reputation for honor and manliness. They even impugned your character. They misconstrued your honest motives and attributed your goodness to selfishness. They slandered your virtues and would debase your manhood. Your friend was there. He repelled every slander, maintained your motives, and defended your honor; but your enemies rose against him. They overpowered him, and in the struggle he fell dead at their feet. You hear of the death of your great-hearted, great-souled friend; you learn of the sacrifice he made; of the proofs of his friendship, of his nobleness, of his unsparing generosity. Your soul is filled with gratitude; your heart is swaying with emotion. You rush to his bier. He is dead. The stains of blood from his heart-wounds tell you of his friendship! They tell you of his esteem for you, of his own nobility of character, of his own greatness of soul! On your knees you implore God to give your friend life once more—but for one moment, that you may breathe into his soul your gratitude; that you may whisper to him how much you love him, how much you admire his friendship, how much you are indebted to his noble-souled defence of your honor. Your soul is bursting with grief and grateful emotions; but no voice responds. Your great friend is dead. The only reply you get is from his wounds, which tell you of his fidelity. Oh, will his

memory be ever effaced from your heart? Never. Perish the thought which would desecrate his memory in the shrine of your soul! No morning will ever dawn, no evening close, but you will beseech the throne of mercy in behalf of your magnanimous friend. You will have the Sacrifice of the Mass offered for him. Every thought will be a prayer for him; and the last wish on your death-bed will be that you may meet him in heaven, and tell him of your great gratitude. But did you ever have such a friend? Yes, one. Behold Him on the cross! Behold Him in the tabernacle! Satan attacked your honor and your dignity. He wished to besmirch your character, to degrade you, to ruin you—and Jesus, your Redeemer, defends you. He died that the nobility of your soul may not be destroyed, nor your manhood impeached, nor your eternal destiny imperiled. He is your great friend; but let me add again, that since you have been meditating during the season of Lent upon His unstinted love as proven by His passion and death, I shall refrain from dwelling longer upon His great mercy, and simply point you to the cross.

On Good Friday evening you pondered over the first precept of charity. I might have left the impression that you do not love God. This was not my purpose. True; I spoke of man's ungratefulness, but left until this morning something which may be said as a testimony of man's homage and love for his Creator. In every age, what immense devotion has been displayed by Catholics for the Supreme Being. Consider the privations endured, the mortifications undergone, the fasting and praying of millions, and all as an expression of gratitude and love to the Creator. For God's sake, the martyrs met death with holy fortitude; the saints lived,

fasted, prayed, and toiled; the Fathers and Doctors of the Church studied, wrote, and imparted knowledge. But it is not necessary to refer to other times or countries. Behold the grand testimony of our own country! See the missionary Fathers of the early days, plodding along the great lakes, descending the Mississippi, traversing dense forests, penetrating the plains, and everywhere giving proof of their indefatigable devotion to man and God. Reflect upon their sufferings and the martyrdom endured, the hunger, the thirst—toiling onward where no other white man dared to tread. The thrilling story of the saintly Marquette is of itself sufficient to demonstrate that in the hearts of men there is obedience to God's will and love for Jesus. Yea, in the hearts of Catholics this love exists, though at times it smoulders. Some Catholics are wicked, some speak the Holy Name with awful irreverence; still, down deep in their hearts there is love for their Saviour and their God. You cannot convince me to the contrary. No Catholics who in childhood lisped the sweet names of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, can entirely dissipate love of God from their hearts. It will break forth at times! It cannot die! It will remind the soul of other and happier and more innocent days! It may become mute except when some disaster or misfortune touches the strings; but perish entirely from the heart it cannot.

On the other hand, note the remarkable devotion of the great mass of Catholics. Observe the sacrifices they make—the journeys undertaken, the exposure, the cold, the feebleness,—all for God. Ah! but who can estimate the silent prayer, the soul exhaling the sweet incense of love—those pure, holy, gentle vibrations of the heart for God, which are never heard, which are born and die in the silence of the soul, or which find

birth in the heart and continued life at the eternal throne of mercy! On this Easter Sunday morning, how many a Catholic heart rises in grateful prayer to Jesus! Millions and millions of Catholics fill the churches in every clime, on this great feast, and offer their thanksgivings to their Redeemer. O Eternal Father of the world! O Eternal Son, Redeemer of the human race! O Holy Spirit, the light of the intellect! all three in One, we adore Thee on this Easter Sunday morning, and offer to You our hearts as a testimony of our love and as an acknowledgment of Your love towards us.

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

And you shall give testimony of Me because you are with Me from the beginning. (St. John xv.—27.)

THE TESTIMONY OF CATHOLICS FOR JESUS.

My Christian Brethren: On this beautiful Sunday morning in Mary's month, and within the octave of the Ascension, our holy Mother the Church calls our attention to this very instructive Gospel. This being Sunday within the octave of the Ascension, the Gospel for to-day is not only instructive, but also very appropriate. It carries us back to the morning of Christianity, and in contemplation we see our Divine Lord addressing His Apostles. What sacred and impressive discourses they have heard from His holy lips! Divine eloquence imparting sublimest truths; infusing charity, patience, and fortitude; bestowing principles which are the life of Christianity, the sustenance and development of civilization, the support of the weak, and the guide to eternal happiness!

On the occasion to which the Gospel refers, He is talking with them of the Holy Ghost. He tells them the Spirit of Truth, Who proceeds from the Father, will give testimony of Him, and adds: "*And you shall give testimony of Me, because you are with Me from the beginning.*" Considering the intimacy with which the Apostles lived with their Divine Master and the marvelous

scenes of power and suffering which transpired in their presence, they were capable to give testimony of the Saviour of Mankind. Our text implies more than it directly conveys. It implies that our Divine Lord's words suggested to them, with as much vividness as if He had spoken it: "You shall give testimony of Me, for you have been witnesses of My miracles; you have heard My teaching and seen its effects; you have been witnesses of My crucifixion; you see the nail wounds in My hands and feet and the lance wound in My side; you saw Me buried; you now behold Me risen from the tomb, and ere long you will behold Me ascending to My Eternal Father. You shall, therefore, be competent to speak with veracity; and the Spirit of Truth Whom I shall send from the Father to you, will bring all things to your mind, will give you firmness to testify concerning Me."

The Blessed Virgin was a most efficient witness of the the life and purpose of her Divine Son. She gave testimony of Him; and her memory, enshrined in the hearts of millions of Catholics, is the grandest confirmation in modern times of the birth of Jesus and the efficacy of His doctrine. She gives testimony of Him, for she is His Mother; she gives testimony of Him, because she stood at the foot of the cross; she gives testimony of Him, because she is a witness of His Resurrection and Ascension, saw the struggle and growth of the infant Church, and is inseparably united with the vitality, efficiency, and endurance of Christianity! Her influence upon the lives of countless Catholics is a testimony that the doctrine of Jesus still survives, is still vigorous, is still obeyed. Her memory carries the Christian back to Bethlehem; induces him to ponder upon the scenes of Jerusalem; awakens thoughts of the Mount of Olives, Tabor, and Calvary.

Passing from the consideration of Mary to that of the Apostles, you will recollect they bore testimony of Jesus ; and that testimony has been continued in the Catholic Church since its institution. The Apostles, by the sanctity of their lives, by their fidelity to their Divine Master, by the consecration of their lives to His service, and by their death, gave testimony ; and their memory still gives testimony of the Redeemer of the human race. The Church established by the Saviour continues the testimony. In every age she has been a witness of His continuance with her. By His assistance she has baffled her enemies and overcome every obstacle to her progress. She gave testimony of Him when the Cæsars ruled Rome ; and during the early persecutions she preached His doctrine, withstood tyranny, and finally triumphed over every opposition. By her endurance, and patience, and charity, she demonstrated the divinity of her unerring Founder. In civilized nations, in the forest of unexplored territories, on sea and land, she carried the banner of Christianity,— the cross. Her churches are crowned by this emblem of salvation ; and rising above the din of contentions and revolutions, it proclaims the Redemption of man and gives testimony of the Redeemer ! Her martyrs gave testimony by their fidelity and their death ! Her saints gave testimony by the holiness of their lives, by the miracles they performed, and by their attachment to Him ! The Fathers of the Church gave testimony of Him by their learning, by their writings, by their preaching and their maintenance of His doctrine ! Every practical Catholic in every age gave testimony that He is Christ the Son of the Most High !

Behold in our own land what testimony is given of Him ! Behold the churches and the convents, the

monasteries and the seminaries, colleges, academies, and parochial schools covering the land and proclaiming His supremacy! The nun in her garb, the monk in his monastery, the toiler at Mass, the child at prayer,—all give testimony of Him. Every priest in every church in every hamlet, town, and city points to Him; and endeavors to lead his flock to Him Who is the Way, the Truth, and the Light. The nation teems with Catholic devotion to Him. Everywhere is abundant testimony given of Him. His love is extolled, His mercy praised, His friendship sought, and His precepts observed. What universal devotion, what unlimited testimony, what unequaled obedience is thus manifested to the Adorable Son of Mary!

If we narrow down our views to a consideration of this parish, what generous testimony you have given Him on many an occasion. In tempestuous weather, over rough and muddy roads you have come, and many of you have often come in feeble health to this church to adore Him Who resides in our tabernacle. During the Sacrifice of the Mass you have knelt before Him, and every prayer was a testimonial of your love, fidelity, and confidence in Him. What great testimony you gave when through the storms of winter and through deep snows you came to hear Mass! You cannot overestimate the edification you gave. What an instructive object lesson you gave to unbelievers in your faith! They must have marveled at your constancy, and I am sure your example bade them often reflect upon the religion you profess. When after Mass you left the church and thronged the sidewalks of this hamlet, your numbers were a demonstration of your faith, which unbelievers admired. A few years ago, in Oil City, a Protestant minister was discoursing to his flock about

attending church on Sunday. He told them they only came in pleasant weather—when the sky was beautiful and the walk exhilarating ; when they wished to see the styles and be seen by the curious ; but, said he, go over to the foot of yonder street and see the flocks of people returning from service in the Catholic Church. They will make you blush for your want of fidelity to God, and show you they have faith in what they believe.

And thus, my beloved brethren, your example gives testimony of your faith, and this faith is the one taught by the Redeemer. Every good Catholic is a priest in his own way. Every good Catholic can and does dissipate prejudice. Every good Catholic gives testimony of Jesus, and this testimony draws souls to kneel at the feet of their Saviour. A priest seldom enters into a conversation with Protestants—they are distant with him ; but the Catholic laity mingles with Protestant society in one way or another ; and if Catholics are instructed and their lives correspond to their faith, they can do much to obliterate the bitterness against them. Protestants, as a class, do not understand our religion, and many of them have the strangest notions about our doctrine. By your conduct, then, give testimony of your faith, give testimony of your charity, gives testimony of Jesus !

Let me once more direct your attention to the testimony you give in your regularity at the August Sacrifice of the Mass. I know you are not like the proud Pharisee who considered himself so perfect that he had to tell God all about it. You are humble in your devotions, you are conscious of your own frailty, and you are reliant upon God, without Whom you know you cannot succeed. From one Sunday to another you exert yourselves in the service of God. While you acknowl-

edge your defects, you strive after perfection. In your toil, in your restraint over yourselves, in your devotion you purpose,—and the greatest, the most ardent, the most anxious purpose of your lives is to give glory to God. Behold the aged here this morning! The man of many years who comes tottering to church! Life for him has already reached its evening. He has had many trials. Often attacks were made in his presence upon his religion. He suffered because he was a Catholic. For this reason others were preferred to him. He felt such wrongs keenly. From his experience he learned that some feeble-minded Catholics abandoned the practice of their faith because it was an obstacle to their advancement. He heard conversations which he could not avoid; and which not only ridiculed his own religion, but scoffed at God. He had, no doubt, his own religious difficulties; for the human intellect strives to penetrate mysteries beyond its ken. But this morning, after all the battles of life, he comes and kneels before His Saviour in the tabernacle, offers Him his heart, and thanks Him for all the favors of life. In an age like ours, is this not great testimony of his faith in Jesus? Is this not a grand tribute of his fidelity, a convincing proof of his faith, an impressive example to teach and direct and stimulate others to serve God? Mark, too, the smallest child that enters this church this morning. See it kneel and make the sign of the cross. Observe it direct its attention to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. Behold its devotion; and tell me, is this not a grand testimony of Jesus? The simplicity of the child's faith, the piety upon its young face, the purity of the young heart, the fixedness of its gaze upon the altar, are the strongest confirmation of the child's love for Jesus and Mary, and the most exalted tribute that innocence and fervor can bestow.

Your attendance at Mass and at other devotions of the Church has often been to me a source of solace and edification. I am glad I can compliment you upon your testimony of Jesus, your Friend and Redeemer. But while I am delighted at your devotion to those things which appertain to God, what can I say of the Catholics who are lax and irregular in their attendance at the services of the Church? It is some consolation to know that in this parish there are only a few of such indifferent persons. These are rarely at Mass. They give no edification to their Protestant neighbors; but it is some satisfaction to understand that their bad example is not injurious to the majority of the congregation. These callous-hearted Catholics are known for the irregularity of their lives, and no sensible person is swayed by anything they do or say. They may endeavor to impress their Protestant neighbors with the notion that they are broad-minded and liberal in their views; that every form of religion is the same to them; that they have outlived this narrowness in religion; that they fraternize with everyone; and that they would as soon go to a Protestant place of worship as to a Catholic. They deceive themselves; for every upright, honest person admires and approves loyalty to conscience and to God. A thoughtful Protestant would say: "If these Catholics are convinced of the errors of their Church, why do they not be regular members of some other church. They should serve God and lead Christian lives. Remaining away from divine service is not worship. The real cause of their indifference is not their Church; but their indolence, their ignorance, and their excesses are the cause. Good Catholics go to their Church; they are better informed than those others, their conduct more edifying, and their veracity

more reliable." Such would be the estimate this practical Protestant would place on their behavior; still, it is lamentable to see them stay at home, without even a thought of God or their own responsibility. They heard the Church bells on Sunday, pleading with them to come to the Divine Sacrifice. Every sound of the bells breaks upon their ears, entreating them, exhorting them to come to church! These bells, consecrated to God, are as angels, messengers of heaven, imploring them to have some pity upon themselves! The voice vibrates in their hearts and undoubtedly awakens some remorse; but when the voice of the bells is hushed, so is their conscience. What testimony do these Catholics give of God? What acknowledgment for His mercies? What atonement for their sins? Their testimony is ingratitude to God and viciousness toward themselves.

Permit me to say, before concluding, that the influence of every good Catholic is one of the most persuasive proofs of the divine institution of your Church. More unbelievers are led to God by the good example of faithful Catholics than by all controversy, however learned and skilful. The influence of your children, as they march from the school to the church on Sunday, is more convincing, more argumentative, more commanding than the most fervent appeals of eloquence. Give testimony of Jesus, therefore, by the fidelity of your lives, and He will not deny you before His Father, but will crown you with the bays of fortitude and faithfulness.

PENTECOST SUNDAY.

If any one love Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and we will come to him, and make an abode with him. (St. John xiv.—23.)

THE OBSERVANCE AND ABUSE OF THE WORD OF GOD.

My Dear Brethren: The great reward obtainable by keeping the word of God is clearly set forth in the Gospel for this Sunday. If any one loves God, he certainly keeps His divine law, and as a recompense for this, Almighty God will abide in his heart. You take solicitous care not to offend any person whom you esteem or love. Your regard for such a person is of so sensitive a nature, that if by any mischance you aggrieve him, you lament your ungraciousness, and your feelings are more hurt than his. In a similar manner, if you love God you will be careful not to insult Him by sin; and if by some misfortune you sin grievously against Him, you cannot rest until you have done all in your power to atone for your transgression. Thus you indicate your love for Jesus. The reward? The Father loves you, and He and your Saviour will take up an abode with you. What an inestimable reward for your love! What a generous condescension is here manifested by the Blessed Trinity! Truly you become the sacred temple of the Holy Ghost!

You must distinguish between hearing the word of God and keeping it. Many hear the sacred teaching of Jesus, but do not observe its saluary lessons. They may come to church on Sunday, hear a sermon, and departing, leave behind them every thought embraced in the instructions. Can the word of God shape their intentions or regulate their behavior? Can the word of God, about which they are so listless, form their lives or mould their Christian aspirations? Can they expect that God will take up His abode with them? It is evident that He will not; for where His law is not observed, He will not and cannot reside. You require no argument to convince you of this, because you understand that God and sin cannot reside in the same person. Indeed, if there were no other sin disfiguring the soul except the sin of the neglect of the word of God, this would be sufficient to bar God from your hearts. But it is quite apparent that where the word of God is not regarded with love, sin there abounds.

The observance of the law of Christ should, then, be a work of pleasure to everyone. You, as Catholics, ought to cherish it in your hearts as a token of esteem and affection for your Saviour; but you ought to do more to show your fidelity to Him; you ought to exert yourselves to make His teachings loved and respected by others. This is particularly true in respect to your children. If you love Jesus, and wish that Himself and His Father and the Holy Ghost will honor you by their presence in your souls, you will train your children to learn and obey the word of God. How are you to accomplish this noble, Catholic work? By training your children at home to love God, and by sending them to your Catholic school, where Christianity commingles with all other class work. Here

the Catholic home-training is improved, advanced, and moulded into true love for Jesus. Here the crucifix voices the love of the Redeemer for children, and awakens, cultivates, and stabilitates the young love of the child for Him Who said : "*Let these come unto Me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.*" A Catholic school is unquestionably a place where children come to Jesus. They come to Him by prayer, by those pure, affectionate meditations suggested by religious objects, by instructions, and by the beautiful religious sentiments contained in their readers. A Catholic school exists in a genuine Christian atmosphere ; an asylum of religious aspiration, and a refuge from the un-Christian contamination so prevalent in other places. A Catholic school is, then, a nursery where love for Jesus is cultured, where an abhorrence for everything filthy, everything base, everything un-Christian, guards the soul and suffers no pollution to enter ! In this unsullied abode of early training the child loves Jesus and keeps His word. The young heart is a temple in which the Blessed Trinity loves to reside ; and that Jesus reigns in this young heart, is well known by the peace, innocence, and piety which adorns the child's face. Can you deny this ? Can any Protestant deny this ? No; not even an atheist would attempt to deny a thing so conformable to all experience. If you want to make a soldier, you send the youth to a military academy ; if you desire to make a doctor, you educate the youth in a medical college ; if you wish to train a young man in the legal profession, you surround him with professors skilled in the law ; and if you want to make a true Christian, you must place him among environments exhaling unadulterated Christian principles ! In this home of Christian instruction the child

imbibes a love for his Saviour and a profound respect for His eternal laws.

You are not ignorant of the hazardous undertaking of heroic Catholic men and devout women for the promulgation of Christian doctrine and the increase of the love of mankind for Christ. We shall not review the influence of religious women in schools and hospitals, but leave you to meditate upon their incalculable power to further the holiest aspirations and stimulate true love for the Son of God. Nor shall we invite you to consider the vast array of saints and martyrs who devoted their lives to the great Christian labor of serving God and man. But we do wish to enlist your attention for a brief consideration of those valiant warriors of the cross who offered their toil and their lives upon the altars of noblest sacrifice in this country. The learned and indefatigable historian of the Catholic Church in the United States, John Gilmary Shea, records the patient achievements of the early Catholic missionaries in this country. They met and overcame every obstacle. Hunger, privation, danger, and death deterred them not. For what purpose did they struggle, instruct, and perish? For the love of Jesus and the preaching of His sacred law. The Jesuits penetrated the forests of the north and central portion of what we now call the United States ; and the Franciscans taught the Indians of the south and extreme west. Shea tells us that by an Indian conspiracy twenty-two Franciscan Fathers perished in New Mexico during the August of 1680. In the north, Bancroft thus describes the Jesuits : " Religious enthusiasm took possession of the wilderness in the upper lakes and explored the Mississippi ; the Roman Church and the Jesuit priests raised for Canada its altars, its hospitals, and its seminaries. In Canada, not a cape was

turned, nor a mission founded, nor a river entered, nor a settlement begun, but a Jesuit led the way." (Vol. ii. —138.) Elsewhere he tells of their suffering and often of their death; and how, when the faithful band would be reduced by massacre, other brave, undaunted soldiers of the Cross would hasten forward to fill the ranks and meet the same dangers. Thus the Christian faith was borne over the great lakes, down vast rivers, and through pathless forests. These tireless men studied the different dialects of the Indian tribes, taught them the redeeming power of Christianity, and made the wilderness a home of Catholic truths. Mass was celebrated in the wigwams of the savages, the Cross was planted upon the shores of rivulet, river, and lake, and civilized man knelt with the savage of the forest to adore the God of all mankind. Is not the recollection of the stupendous work of those heroes sufficient to awaken in you renewed fervor and devotion? Do you not rejoice in their heroism and applaud their fidelity? Do you not marvel at their fortitude and extol their success? Most assuredly. You cannot reflect upon the history of their lives without admiring their constancy and compassionating their sufferings. But for what was all this exposure endured? You need not be told that it was for the glory of God and the promulgation of His doctrine.

But now let me inquire, can you do nothing to increase the observance and love of the word of God? Are you unable or unwilling to do something in a cause for which so many great hearts have bled and died? There is no question but that you can perform much good, and that some of you can accomplish considerable for love of Jesus. By the example of your lives, by the training of your children, by the sacrifices you make

for religion, you prove yourselves in sympathy with those celebrated missionaries who once traversed the wilds of this great nation. To keep the word of God is, therefore, an ennobling work; for by so doing you become missionaries preaching, by the conduct of your lives, the love of Jesus, and the respect which every one should have for His precepts. The work which a devout, practical Catholic can perform is inestimable. The influence he has in a parish cannot be over-estimated. Almighty God resides in his soul and co-operates with him for the accomplishment of untold good.

Yea, but how many so-called Christians do not observe the word of God! They are strangers to His graces, and often enemies to the dissemination of His doctrine. How many Catholics, too, practice not this doctrine, which would increase their happiness here, while it would guarantee an eternal abode with the Father of heaven and earth! How many a Catholic hears and knows the word of Jesus, still by his behavior defies the law of Jesus! Such persons know the word of salvation, still, hate their neighbor, rejoice at his miseries, and mourn his prosperity. Are these not Catholics who have banished every trace of the word of God from their souls and every vestige of early training from their hearts? They are involved in the meshes of sin, sunk into dissipation, disregarded, dishonored, and disgraced. How many a Catholic, not satisfied with his own debasement, pulls down other souls into the filth in which himself wallows! Having driven the word of God from his own bosom, he beguiles others into the same terrible misfortune. His ambition is not to promote the welfare of human nature, but to tarnish, corrupt and debase it; his ambition is not to keep the

word of God, but to destroy it; his ambition is not to elevate himself and his fellows, but condemn both to wretchedness and despair here and beyond the grave! And if there is profit or advancement in such fiendish undertakings, what will he not attempt? What debasement so low into which he will not plunge himself and his fellow man? Oh, how wretched is he who keeps not the word of God in his heart. The Father and the Son are exiled from his soul, and instead of his being a temple of the Holy Ghost, he is an abode of Satan.

From the first man who was created till the present moment, disobedience to the word of God has entailed havoc and misery, and thus it will continue to devastate the human race. Devout observance of the teachings of the Gospel is the surest guide to peace and the best protection against dire calamity. Sickness and death may come as a consequence of our now neglect and the first sin which cursed the earth, but these are only natural inheritances; and when not provoked by our own excesses, are neither disgraceful nor sinful. It is sin, itis the violation of God's law which brings malediction in its train. What is it that fills our jails with the enemies of society? What crowds our penitentiaries and reformatories? What leads the unfortunate to the scaffold? What corrupts our judges, destroys domestic peace, debases our legislatures, but the non-observance of the divine law? Whence arise all the contentions between Capital and Labor? Why does one man oppress another? Why does one defame another, rob another, murder another? Simply because the teachings of the Saviour of mankind are not observed. They are banished from the hearts of many. They regulate not the affairs of many, and the result is oppression, wretchedness, and untimely death. The

same cause has impoverished nations, plunged them into war which cost thousands of men and countless millions of dollars.

There is a man. He totters as he walks. The sidewalk is not broad enough for him. He must occupy the gutter. What is it that has benumbed his physical powers? What has robbed him of his reason? What has sunk him below the brute? You tell me he has been indulging too copiously. Yes ; but did he not then or previously expel the word of Jesus from his soul? And by so acting has he not degraded himself, dethroned his reason, and infested himself and his sad home with desolation and want? What about all the mortal sins,—impurity, incontinency, perjury, suicide —and all the other letcherous crimes which ruin society and the state? It is the abuse of God's word, which pillages a nation by the wickedness of its rulers ; it is the abuse of God's word, which robs the judicial bench of its sacred regard for justice ; it is the abuse of God's word, which deprives the national councils of their wisdom and makes the members thereof rapacious in their own personal interests ; it is the abuse of God's word, which causes tyranny and revolution ; it is the abuse of God's word, which makes right consist in power, which makes justice a mockery, which impels the strong nation to crush the liberties of the weak, which annuls the rights of the masses and proclaims wealth a dictator ! A nation which departs from the observance of the law of God will not long maintain its liberties nor its equalities. It will decay as many another nation has decayed. Well, indeed, it would be were statesmen to learn from the downfall of other nations. As God abandons the individual who ignores His eternal decrees, so he forsakes the nation which

despises the precepts of the Gospel ; and disorder, ruin, and humiliation are the inevitable consequences.

But he who observes the law taught by the Redeemer and diffused by His Church, will be loved by the Father. An affectionate union will exist between such a creature and his Creator. During the brief span of mundane existence he will be a child of heaven, and the dews of God's benedictions will enrich his soul. He will be more honored, more esteemed, more trustworthy than the violator of the divine order. Notwithstanding the vicissitudes of this life, peace will abide in his heart,—that peace which the martyrs and saints enjoyed in their tribulations ; that peace which the world cannot give ; that peace which emanates from the source of all good—Almighty God. A true follower of Christ possesses this tranquillity. His every act is in conformity with the divine word. Before every transaction he examines its nature to see whether it conflicts with the law of God ; and hence he is guided in all his undertakings by the Holy Spirit. His ambition is to conform his will with the will of the Most High. His deliberations and actions are preceded by prayer. He invokes the blessing of God upon his enterprises ; and if he fail, it is the will of God, in order that divine love may draw him closer to itself, and teach him how perishable and uncertain are the things of this life ; how positive and enduring are the things of heaven.

On this solemn and glorious feast of Pentecost, together we have considered to some extent our text. But we should not be satisfied with so brief a meditation; we should often reflect upon our duty in observing the word which Jesus taught, and our mind ought to revert often to this great feast upon which the Holy Ghost gave to

the Apostles knowledge and fortitude to preach infallibly the doctrine entrusted to them. To-day we should live in thought among those sacred places which were immortalized by the birth of Christianity. To-day we should recall the Ascension of our Saviour into heaven and the miraculous effects of the Descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles. On the birth-day of this feast which you celebrated to-day, Christianity was animated with life, courage, and ceaseless endurance by the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity. The spirit imparted to the Apostles on that memorable occasion continues to stimulate and direct the Church. It was this spirit which bore the standard of the Cross to this vast continent; it was this spirit which sustained the missionary in his anxieties, privations, and martyrdom; and this spirit teaches the observance of the Gospel and its consequent reward—the love of the Blessed Trinity for every faithful Christian. The love for Jesus, and the promulgation of His doctrine, drew Columbus from his native land, encouraged him in all his efforts for preparation, and nerved his soul as he lost sight of the coast of Spain. It was this love which braved the dangers of the wilderness, which offered the Adorable Sacrifice of the Mass where a white man had never before prayed. It was this love and this spirit infused into the Church on Pentecost, which raised the cross on the banks of the rivers and the lakes of this country, and maintained against all opposition its power and influence in the New World. "*Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations*," says our Saviour to His Apostles; and this injunction has continued to be obeyed, and will continue to be obeyed to the end of time. "*Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded ye*."—"Teach them to keep My word; teach them to be devout Chris-

tians ; teach them to aspire to heaven, that My Father may love them, and that the Father and I may take up an abode in their souls ! "

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

And they began all at once to make excuse. (St. Luke, xiv.—18.)

THE FOLLY OF WORLDLY DESIRES.

My Dear Brethren: Our Divine Lord by this parable calls our attention to His everlasting banquet—the kingdom of heaven. It is prepared for all who love Him. In truth, all are invited to the supper, but not all will participate therein. The reason for their absence is obvious. A preparation is necessary for admission to the banquet hall where Almighty God appeases the hunger and thirst of souls famishing for the great object of all their pious desires. A preparation is necessary; still, how many neglect to prepare. They are too engrossed with the affairs of this life even to heed the invitation. They are engaged, entirely engaged with their farms and oxen, with their merchandise and bank accounts, with seeking office and securing political power, to comply with the invitation. They prefer the attractions of time to the joys of eternity. They attempt to seize the passing shadow, while they neglect the permanent, the everlasting.

You will observe, however, that those who refused the invitation did not accuse themselves of any crime. They were not even in any mischief. They were all profitably engaged, as the world understands profit. Our Saviour charges them with no positive offence. He

does not say they are thieves, or rascals, or drunkards, or anything of that kind. Their sin is of a negative nature. They are too interested in securing the perishable, while they omit and reject the obedience and homage due the Supreme Being. You may consider them foolish for not accepting the invitation ; but we are just as unwise when we attend not to those things pertaining to our eternal salvation. Indeed, some Catholics are more foolish, because our Divine Lord could be more severe with them for rejecting His invitation. Can He not say, these refused because they were engaged in many and many a revolting crime ? How often He has entreated such Catholics to abandon their wicked ways, and how seldom they comply with His entreaty. They are engaged in violating God's commandments, in wronging others, and in disregarding the appeals of their Church. They cannot say farewell to these offences. They are convinced that the period of time from a mother's caresses to the grave's reception, is brief. Observation has impressed this important truth upon them, still they act as though they never saw a funeral. The allurements and blandishments of earth have more attractions for them than the things of heaven. Is this not supreme folly ? The greatest and noblest honors of earth will vanish when the Angel of Death appears. They are only fleeting phantoms. Why does not man, then, seek his attractions in heaven ?

Peruse the history of the human race, and what do you discover ? All who were lauded to the skies, live now only in the memory of written thought. Where is the consummate general whose valor decked him with martial glory ? His prestige is swallowed up by the tomb. Where is the sagacious statesmen whose achieve-

ments won him the plaudits of a nation? Ask the dust in his grave. Would you seek the tyrant who gloried in the diadem of despotism? Go ask the tomb what power he now enjoys. The mighty tongue which swayed multitudes by its charming and persuasive eloquence is hushed by the silence of the cemetery. The hand skilful with the chisel or the brush was robbed of its animation by the paralyzing touch of death. Where are the avaricious—those who devoured their fellow man that they might be enriched? Their desires are vanquished, and scattered is their opulence. Whither would you search for the beauty and the gorgeousness that have adorned the festive halls of ages now past? Magnificent they were in their blandishments, and their gracefulness was a magnet of attraction. Now they are dust! Their names have perished from the land in which they were idols; and their power and influence are no more than the dust of their mortal remains. Thus disappears the pomp and fascination of greatness; yea, and meanness, too. "*Surely man passeth as an image:.....he storeth up, and he knoweth not for whom he shall gather those things.*" (Psalm xxxviii. —7.)

"But not all of man will die." The spirit rises triumphant over this destruction or deplores its own existence. The good rejoice with their Divine Master Whom they faithfully served. The wicked receive the punishment which their deeds merit. It follows, therefore, that he only is great who is righteous. He is great on earth in being a child of heaven; he is great in heaven for being devoted on earth to Almighty God. He might have suffered the pangs of adverse fortune, but like some great mountain peak, he rose above the clouds of adversity, and "midway left the storm" to

find solace in the bosom of his Saviour. When crowns fall at the grave's brink, when beauty fades before the wand of Death, when power is transformed into fear by the tombstone, when wealth is relinquished by the last will and testament to unworthy heirs, then Christian virtue triumphs and looks with confidence beyond the chasm of Death! The discomforts of earth are forgotten and hope springs from the promises of Jesus, the Redeemer and Friend of the faithful! God is the great centre of attraction for devout Christians. Above and beyond every other attraction He is the worshipped object of all their desires. Then, let your aspirations go out to Him. Let no other desire eclipse this eternal centre of Christian love. Practice virtue every day of your life; for,

> "Know then this truth, enough for man to know,
> Virtue alone is happiness here below."—Pope.

It cannot be denied but that the world is becoming more and more infatuated with the tinsels of mundane greatness. Wealth is king and dictator; and in the shape of monopolies and trusts, he becomes a despot—a despot to grind the poor, to deprive the laborer of his rightful compensation, and to plunder the markets. In many respects the lowly are worse situated than in ages now dead. The spirit of selfishness is more grasping, while charity and faith are insufficient to curb the greed of the powerful. National rulers stand forth the personification of avarice and injustice. It is a crime for a nation now to be weak. Such offer a tempting inducement to a great, ambitious nation to invade the weak one's territory; and under the guise of civilization and the advancement of Christian principles, plunder without remorse, devastate with impunity, and murder in

the name of religion and liberty! The ministers of Christ raise their voice against such fiendish depredations; they proclaim the invitation sent forth by the Saviour of mankind; they warn, they exhort; but the rapacious rulers and the trusts and the political "rings" are too busy to give any attention or to comply with the laws of justice and humanity. Some are too busy inculcating religion and civilization at the point of the bayonet—teaching a people morals who are better than the invader and more Christian than their new teachers. These have no time to consider the invitation announced by our Divine Lord. They are fanatics, and their fanaticism blinds them. In minor affairs others are so engaged that they have no time to prepare for the banquet to which all are invited by a merciful God. In our day, too, some must attend to their farms, others are married to non-Catholics, and these prevent the former from giving that attention and care to the affair of their salvation which are necessary. Some more have their mercantile business to manage. One has his family, another his bonds, a third his stocks, a fourth his investments; but no one has time enough to reflect upon the imperishable. The markets absorb the attention of many. Others are engaged with inventions, with study, with enterprise; but how many are absorbed in the contemplation of those things which endure beyond the grave's consumption? What is more deplorable, some deny all future accountability. For them there is no God! No hereafter! To guile their conscience, to seize without scruple the things of others, to trample without fear upon the rights of others, to enjoy without restraint sinful pleasure, they cry out: "There is no God!"

But, now, my Christian friends, were we to examine

ourselves this morning, could we truthfully say that our conduct is that of sincere, practical Catholics? Do we heed the invitation of our Saviour calling upon us to prepare for the banquet of heaven? Are we not too indifferent, too careless, too inactive? Do we not say to ourselves, there is time enough? Later on, when we are not so occupied with care and business, we will give our undivided attention to the practice of our holy religion. While the majority of Catholics are earnest in their devotion to God, are there not, nevertheless, some who love the idols of earth? They ignore the voice of conscience crying to them words of warning and counsel. Pleasure occupies their hearts and consumes their souls. They are repeatedly admonished, yet they cling to these worldly attractions which make slaves of them. The sinful pursuits of life rob them of honor, corrode the heart, blight the affections, destroy health, damn the soul! Judging from their recklessness, you would conclude there is no God for them except the idols of drunkenness and impurity. To propitiate these gods there is no family endearment they will not sacrifice; no noble pursuit they will not abandon; no shame they will not endure! These constitute their heaven—these are their gods! How fiendish to themselves! How ungrateful to God! Their Saviour pleads with them to come to Him and He will pardon all. The ministers of His Church implore them to forsake the sinful, destructive haunts of iniquity, but in vain. Our merciful Saviour may be compelled to rebuke them with the words of the Book of Proverbs: "*Because I have called, and you refused,..... I also will laugh in your destruction; I will mock when that shall come to you which you fear.*" (i.—24, 26.)

Others, though they drink not of the poisonous

springs of excess, nevertheless are careless about their salvation. It is not altogether by avoiding evil, but in doing good, that the kingdom of God is reached. We should be energetic in good works, and from day to day increase our capital in heaven. Instead of this, we are usually solicitous for the things of earth. The farmer has his vexations, the mechanic his duties, the merchant his business—all, or nearly all, have something to distract their mind and absorb their attention. The one great object of life is generally overlooked: "*Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His justice.*" (St. Math. vi.—33.) Indeed, this appeal in our day seems to be inverted. Everything else is sought first; and the search for the kingdom of God is postponed until the eyes are dim, the step slow, the heart cold, and the aspirations enfeebled by old age. When our earthly career is approaching its terminus, we may with regret acknowledge the truth of the following words: "*What hath pride profited us; or what advantage hath the boasting of riches brought us? All those things are passed away like a shadow.*" (Wisdom v.—8.)

It is nonsense, and certainly unbecoming a Christian, to seek with feverish toil the transitory things of earth. You have, no doubt, often experienced the insignificance of things acquired, though you once craved for them with anxious fervor. After much effort and incessant labor you obtained them; and after you had toyed with them for a while they lost their charm. They pleased you for awhile, just as the dazzling colors of a soap bubble delights a child. But the bubble breaks and the beauty disappears. So it is with the bubbles and the toys of mature years. What satisfied you yesterday, to-day are irksome to you. What you long for now will soon lose its fascinating attractiveness when it is

yours. The more the cravings of the heart are pampered, the more the heart desires. Earthly attractions serve as fuel for the flame. The more obtained, the more the fires of human desire are increased. Withdraw the fuel, and the consuming heart will get relief. Be contented with a few things, that God may place you over many in His kingdom. Listen not to the enchanting mesmerism of wealth, of pleasure, or of intemperance. If you are bewitched by these sirens, they will bind you heart and soul. You will be slaves, and in this slavery you will be unhappy ; because you have ruthlessly severed the golden strands of that friendship which made you children of your Heavenly Father.

We should, then, discipline ourselves to be content with our condition in life and moderate our desires. Our desires should never be permitted to become immoderate or to subdue our reason, though we may justly labor to improve our condition. We should weigh things carefully, and understand that every thing we wish may not be beneficial for us. Indeed, it may be that the very things we seek may augment our troubles. We often overestimate or underestimate the condition of others. We are dissatisfied with our own lot, and consequently magnify the advantages of another's position. The farmer would be a lawyer ; the lawyer, a doctor ; the doctor, a scientist ; a president, a king. Some are not pleased with their vocations. They would not be, were they to embrace all the professions and all the trades. Something would still be wanting. The poet speaks truthfully :

> " Man never is, but always to be blessed ;
> The soul, uneasy and confined at home,
> Rests and expatiates in a life to come."—(Pope.)

The soul's yearning indicates its tendency, and the

true object of that tendency is Almighty God. Disencumber the soul of worldly attractions, and it will soar to heaven as naturally as the mariner's needle turns to the pole. Trample to earth your unabated desires. They destroy your tranquillity and exhaust even your physical strength without compensation. Do not, however, understand me to say that you should make no effort to advance in the honest employments of life. Righteousness is not incompatible with progress, but is the guardian angel of true advancement. A sage may be saint; a dunce, a devil.

Let us, therefore, always remember that we were not created to dwell forever on earth; that our destiny is higher and nobler; that we have been invited to the banquet of heaven, where God will satisfy our desires. Let us pray earnestly and constantly that we may be present at that everlasting feast. Let us hunger and thirst, but not for the perishable things of earth, but for the imperishable with God; because, "*Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after justice, for they shall be filled.*"

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

So I say to you, there shall be joy before the angels of God upon one sinner doing penance. (Luke xv.—10.)

On Repentance.

My Dear Brethren: In to-day's Gospel you easily perceive the tenderness and mercy of the Saviour of mankind. He represents Himself as a shepherd leaving the ninety-nine sheep which are safe in the fold, and searching for the one which is lost. Finding it, He takes it upon His shoulders, brings it home, and invites the angels of heaven to rejoice. This beautiful example of the love of Jesus for the erring ones is intensified when you consider the Shepherd and the interest heaven takes in your salvation. What encouragement for those Catholics who have strayed far from the fold of Christ's Church! How these words of the Gospel should pierce their souls and arouse a spirit of deepest contrition! They have been headstrong and unrelenting in their wicked impetuosity, obstinate in their sins; but the Saviour has not abandoned them. Repeatedly He has sought them out, supplicated them to return, remonstrated with them; but, alas! they would not listen. He then visits them with adversity, with sickness, ill-fortune, or the death of some dear friend or beloved relative. It may be through the instrumentality of a good book or through the in-

ducement of a friend to enter a church, that they become converted. In some manner or another Jesus touches the heart, and the barren rock gives forth the fertilizing waters of repentance. From a polluted tongue and a sordid soul comes forth the cry for mercy. The angels of God rejoice ; and Jesus, the Good Shepherd, brings back the erring children of His Church. The angels of heaven might exclaim : "What is there in perverse man, that God is so mindful of him!"

Yea, this is a problem which baffles human intellect. Why is Almighty God so mindful of corrupt man, is a question which a sage cannot answer. "What a piece of work is man!" says Shakespeare. Yea, he is a model piece of work, because he was planned and fashioned by his Creator! He is a noble piece of work in chastity, in temperance, in Christian fortitude! But in impurity, drunkenness, and infidelity he is a degraded mass of human filth! In rebellion against God, he is a fallen angel—fallen from that high position he enjoyed in that morning of his first Communion—fallen from that beautiful sphere of grace in which he was so happy for many years! Yea, he is a fallen angel and with Lucifer in Milton boastfully exclaims :

> "Here we may reign secured, and in my choice
> To reign is worth ambition, though in hell;
> Better to reign in hell than serve in heaven."

Yea, to reign is, too, the sinner's ambition ; to lead in rebellion against His Saviour ; to reign in the region of sin ; to reign in the hell of his creation ; to reign amidst the fiendish associates of that hell!

Now, consider the mercy of God. He goes to that sinner, as low and as shameful as he has become. He assures that sinner that he can still become a child of heaven. He entreats that sinner to come to the fold,

whence the allurements of sin had enticed him, or the force of unrestrained passion had driven him. He tells that sinner that his sins will be blotted out forever, and that the angels of heaven will rejoice at his conversion. Might you not in wonderment reflect upon this amazing condescension of your Saviour? Might you not in astonishment follow in thought your Redeemer as He goes in search of this lost sheep? Weariless He seeks him; and though often rebuffed, He does not forsake him until the sinner returns, or until he shows his determination to reject every proffered aid of divine grace. If he accept the arms of his Saviour stretched out to receive him, the renovating influence of penance will pervade his soul; and again he will kneel at the feet of Jesus and ask for pardon and for help. Again, he will approach the holy tribunal of penance while angels are praying for him; and while contrition rises from his sorrowing heart to plead for mercy, the sacred blood of Jesus purifies his soul. How happy he is now in the Church of his childhood; in the Church in which he received first Holy Communion; in the Church in which the fondest recollections of more peaceful days are entwined. The gentle, joyful effects of divine grace fill his soul; and he rejoices that he is once more in the friendship of his God.

Repentance, which is necessary for the pardon of sin in the Sacrament of Penance, must not, however, be confounded with that shame which often besmirches the transgressor, or with remorse which corrodes the heart, engenders despair, and drives its victim to self-ruin. Repentance is pleasing to God, and brings graces and consolation to the penitent. The declaration of Jesus that "*there shall be joy before the angels of God upon one sinner doing penance,*" fills us with hope. But we should

not deceive ourselves by thinking that shame or remorse is contrition. A person may be overwhelmed with shame because his sin becomes public. This is not penitence. It is self-love. Again, a person may suffer the pangs of remorse on account of some injury done by him to some great-souled friend ; or on account of health ruined by sinful excesses. But this is not sorrow for sin. It is regret or despair. True repentance arises from a soul afflicted, because it has rent apart the friendship which bound it to its Creator.

But just as a convalescent must avoid a relapse and shun in the future the cause of his sickness, so must a penitent take precaution to evade the contagion of sin. A penitent who is sincere with himself, who laments his offences against God, will remove the causes of former sins, shun the occasions thereof, remedy the effects and consequences as far as he is able, and energetically employ the means required for perseverance in the peace of God. Unless he comply with these stipulations, he is not converted ; nor does he truthfully renounce the insults offered to his Maker. Though he has gone to confession, his condition is not improved. If he is truly repentant, he will in the first place remove the causes and the proximate occasions of his former sins. It may be, the reading of bad books and bad newspapers has seared his soul. The feast enjoyed in this pernicious diversion filled his soul with the germs of many a crime and awakened all the licentious passions of his heart. This vicious reading not only sowed the seed of sin, but watered it from springs which have their source in hell. Ah ! my friends, if any of you have thus poisoned your soul and blighted the genuine affections of the heart, you must forever abandon this destructive dissipation ; otherwise you

are not sincere in your repentance. A book which a young man or young woman would not read aloud to his or her parents, is a book that you must consign to the flames. A book, too, which must be kept under lock and key is a curse to a Christian family. Banish from your homes these enemies of morality, these instigators of a wicked life, these destroyers of precious time!

Have you fallen into sin by attending dances, or have you found them dangerous to virtue? If so, your moral life demands you to shun such danger. Beware lest in the ball-room you receive your first introduction to the demon of sin! Should you find or suspect that where others have been decoyed by the charm of immoral blandishments, you also are in peril, then repentance requires you to refrain from such snares. But your Christian fortitude will protect you? Alas! how many a one has been ruined by an over-reliant confidence in his own powers. He who fears not danger will perish therein. Remember, if these haunts of allurement have been an occasion of sin to you, you are obliged to avoid them forever. This is a requisite of penance. It will not profit you anything to make weekly confessions, if you continue to expose yourselves to dangers which have heretofore proved your enemies. You must eradicate the cause, and shun the proximate occasion of sin in order that your contrition may be acceptable to your offended God.

Having resolved to avoid the proximity of sin, and with prayer supplicated the throne of the Most High for aid in this arduous undertaking, we must turn our attention to restitution. Penitence demands that we make good all the injuries of which we are guilty. If we have involved ourselves in debt, or in any manner

unjustly taken another's goods, we cannot or should not console ourselves with the thought that these are cancelled by our compunction of heart. No sorrow, no tears are sufficient to atone for an injustice done our neighbor. Restitution is the thing indispensable. On the other hand, if we have slandered our neighbor's reputation, we are obliged to make reparation. It is incumbent upon us not only to correct our tongue, but to repair the damage inflicted by our speech. How grievously one may offend in this way; and how little he cares to satisfy for his or her vile, unmerciful attacks! But you must remember that reparation is obligatory. Hesitate not in the accomplishment of this painful obligation. It requires you to trample upon your own conceits; yet it will elevate you in the esteem of heaven. Such humiliation may rob you of a part of your temporal prestige, but angels will rejoice at your conversion,—you will "bring forth fruit in penance." In your frailty you sinned and inflicted injury upon others. Now break away from the moorings of human weakness. Save yourselves, and by your example save others who are shipwrecked upon the billows of passion or submerged by the waves of remorse and despair.

There still remains another requirement to which I ought to direct your attention. It is that of perseverance. To make a good resolution is not difficult; but to continue faithful in the resolve, is no easy matter. Our nature is frail; it needs assistance. To prevent a relapse is better than to prescribe remedies when the patient is deathly sick. One great preventive against sin is employment. Keep yourselves occupied. When the mind and body are engaged, pernicious thoughts find no room; nor do the seductions of the world find an audience in a soul busied with the achievements of

industry. Therefore, employ yourselves. Labor engenders contentment and tranquillity of heart. Labor well borne and offered to God, becomes meritorious, enriches the soul, elevates the toiler, and protects him from the infectious influence of wicked associations! Prayer must not be overlooked in a subject of this kind. It is the food of perseverance! It induces the mind to contemplate the Creator, His mercies, and His rewards. It sustains the penitent's fidelity to his resolution, and obtains for him the assistance of divine grace. Ask, therefore, your merciful Father for aid. He will not abandon a contrite heart. "*Ask and you shall receive*," are His words of encouragement to the sinner. Go frequently to confession; you will thus secure the grace of this sacrament; you will be reanimated; a new spirit will pervade your whole being. A ransomed soul will thank God for its freedom! A pure heart will discern the unmasked follies and sinful tortures of a wicked life! What was once considered a charm of licentiousness will be undisguised, and appear in its hideous repulsiveness. A salutary hatred for all pleasures which decoy from God, will protect the penitent from relapse. Nourish yourselves also with the Bread of Angels,—the Bread which came down from heaven to be your sustenance and salvation. "*I am the living Bread which came down from heaven*," says our Divine Saviour. "*If any man eat of this Bread, he shall live forever; and the bread which I will give is My flesh for the life of the world.*" (St. John vi.—51, 52.) How generous You are, O God! to us weak creatures. You go in search for Your erring children, and with divine patience You labor to persuade them to return to blissful peace. In return for their submissiveness, You make them tabernacles in which Yourself resides, and promise them a dwelling in Your eternal mansions.

Finally, let me say that repentance consists in hatred for sin and love for God. Melancholy, morbid fear should have no resting-place in the penitent's heart. Jesus does not say that Mary Magdalen feared Him, but that she loved Him. "*Many sins are forgiven her because she loved much.*" (St. Luke vii.—47.) Repentance and pardon are the purifying waters which have their sources in love. Mary Magdalen loved Jesus; St. Augustine loved Jesus; and many another penitent saint loved Jesus; and it was their love co-operating with the merciful, gentle, persuasive entreaties of Jesus which conducted them back to the fold whence they had strayed. How happy a penitent is when he is once more in the friendship of the Good Shepherd. The heart is buoyant, the soul exultant and grateful. Another Magdalen yields to the persuasiveness of her Redeemer; another Monica has been heard, and another Augustine becomes a saint. Their lives should instruct us. After their conversion they remained fervent, faithful, and affectionate in their attachment to Jesus. Magdalen bathed her Saviour's feet with her tears, and on the morning of the Resurrection she hastened to the tomb to anoint these same feet. Her love had not diminished. St. Augustine, after his conversion, devoted his life to advance the glory of God and atone for his sins. His great works bespeak the intensity of his love. During all the ages how many a sinner has become a penitent, and how many a penitent has become a saint, and how many such saints are now in heaven with the Good Shepherd!

Listen, then, to the voice of the Good Shepherd calling you to repentance, and through repentance to peace, and through peace to a joyful realization of His loving mercy. He points with compassion to the con-

fessional, and whispers to the soul hope and fortitude. The confessional is the refuge of sinners, the consolation of broken hearts, the solace of the afflicted, the sustenance of saints, a benevolent repository of Christ's love and mercy to mankind! Let us kneel there with the spirit of true repentance, and while the priest is pronouncing the words of absolution Jesus will kindly whisper: "The angels of God congratulate you upon your presence here and rejoice in your conversion."

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Be sober and watch. (1 Epistle of St. Peter v.—8.)

On Gambling.

My Dear Brethren: These few words comprise a very comprehensive exhortation. If carefully observed, they will be of great benefit to us. You will agree that it is of inestimable utility for us to be sober in all our affairs, and to be vigilant lest some time we make a mistake. St. Peter entreats us to be on our guard. "Because our adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion goeth about, seeking whom he may devour." It is consequently necessary for us to be vigilant if we are desirous to avoid his snares. Even in temporal affairs vigilance is requisite if we would sail clear of these hidden promontories upon which so many have been wrecked. The Father of our Country has wisely said that "Eternal vigilance is the price of Liberty." This maxim is as essential in individual pursuits as it is in perpetuating the stability of a nation. You must watch if you wish to be successful. It is just when you think you are secure that you may meet opposition; or as the Sacred Scriptures admonish: "*Beware when you stand, lest you fall.*" You may congratutate yourselves in this manner: "NowI am safe. Everything prospers. There is not a speck of a threatening cloud upon the sky. The current which bears me onward is as smooth as a summer's sea. No danger is near. I can relax

the oars ; everything is propitious." Just then a storm breaks, and from a quarter whence you least expected trouble. A storm, too, it may be, which will tax your energies and may exhaust your judgment to overcome. Undoubtedly you have observed this stern perverseness in temporal concerns ; nor can you be ignorant of the opposition met on the way to Christian perfection. Hence the sage advice of Peter : "*Be sober and watch.*"

Now, when I say with St. Peter, that you should be sober, you may soliloquize with yourselves in this fashion : "He is always talking about drunkenness. Exhorting us to be sober, just as if we were a congregation of sots. It is temperance in season and out of season with him." Well, my Christian friends, a person may be intemperate in more ways than drinking. A man may be very abstemious in his physical cravings, but very intemperate in his mental foresight and mental occupations. He is not a sober-minded man, who is not vigilant; he is not a sober-minded man, who neglects his duties ; he is not a sober-minded man, who is rash in his judgment or mad in his excesses ! He certainly is not a sober-minded man, nor a prudent man, nor a wise man, who indulges in games of chance ! These games make him mad. From the time he begins to be a gambler, he is sharpening the dagger which will pierce his own heart, or the heart of some other person. He departs from the ways of honesty; and to meet the demands of the gaming table, he will betray trust, rob his family, and plunder if he can. He looses, but he is determined he will win. The more he looses, the more determined he becomes. His losses fire him with passion and with resolve. "I must win," he says to himself. "I must win, and will win. I am not discouraged. In the lexicon of a gambler there is no such word as fail !

Though I am 'dead broke,' I shall borrow ; and if I cannot borrow, I will steal! I will have my money back, and show those fellows that they do not know all the tricks of gambling. Luck is now against me, but pluck I have, and pluck must win ! " Such is his condition and such his resolve. Watch him at the game. See the intensity of passion in his face ; see the nervous expression, the haggard look, the madman's glare'! Hear the subdued growl, then the fierce vehemence, the ferocious oath, the mad determination—again all is lost ! He begs his associates to loan him enough to start again ; but they are weary of lending to him ; and there is little profit in winning their own money. They refuse. Then he pawns his goods ; or, if he is in a position to forge notes or plunder his employer, he immediately resorts to this dangerous and destructive way of filling his purse for the next game.

Now you reply : " We do not intend to go to such extremes. We are moderate in our bets and sober in our calculations. We are not such fools as to let such things run away with us. Before we become such slaves we will desist altogether. We play for money, it is true ; but the pastime is what we principally desire. A little recreation." But how do you know you will remain within the bounds of moderation ? What guarantee have you got that you will never reach the extremes ? What security, what protection have you, that you will not be as desperate as others ? You have no guarantee except that which experience teaches of the gambler, and that is the guarantee of ruin ! You have no security, no protection, except that which gamblers find in remorse, despair and the prison cell ! Now, some of you think it is a very trying ordeal to spend a half hour in church on Sunday mornings ; but what

do you do the rest of the day? Where are you? In what company are you wasting so much precious time? "What are we doing? Why, we are making money and in the meantime having recreation." Making money? If you are, some other one is losing. And is this the way you purpose to make money? Do you intend to plunder others that you may be able to say you are making money? Will you take the bread from the mouth of the hungry child? Will you take the shoes from its feet? Will you be a demon infesting homes with tears and wretchedness and despair? You will never go so far? Well, if you have such boasted confidence in your self-control; if your claims are not rashly overestimated,—why do you not now restrain yourselves? Why do you now play as long as there is one cent to win or lose? Why do you now squander your valuable time, neglect your duties, and desecrate the Sunday in some secret resort where you can gamble? Such conduct is not sober. No sober-minded man will engage in such disastrous, damnable pursuits! No sober-minded man will ruin another or himself! No sober-minded man will bring infamy upon himself or destruction upon others!

There are in this parish some young men who gamble, and a few old men, too. Solomon in all his wisdom was not arrayed as those old men are. You cannot teach them anything. Their capacity for knowledge is overstocked. They are silly in their language, foolish in their behavior, and brainless in the management of their own affairs! Well, if you cannot teach them anything, is it not wise to learn from their failures? What have they except poverty? Though they may earn good wages, they have not a dollar. Though they may be Solons in sagacity, their homes are destitute

and their families impoverished. The wife is a picture of blighted hope and wretched want. The children wild, untrained, and with no knowledge of religion or God. Do the young men of this parish, who indulge in games of chance, desire a future so dismal and so deplorable as this? Will they imitate the old gambler and become an abject, dissipated, ruined object of pity and reproach; or will they be weaned from such debasement by the abhorrent spectacle of a rational being so defiled, so degraded, so ruined? Young men, if you are sober, you will learn much useful knowledge from the human wrecks strewn around you. You will watch, and in your vigilance avoid those things which destroyed and are destroying others. You will discover considerable wisdom in these words of the poet:

"Prudent, cautious self-control is wisdom's root."—(Burns.)

Young men should not sow the seed of vice in their hearts, because as you sow you will reap. If in youth you sow bad seed, you cannot expect to reap a harvest of good fruit. Observe the husbandman, how carefully he sows and plants. If there is any bad seed, the seed of weeds among the grain he is to sow, see how wisely he winnows his seed so as to separate the good seed from the bad. Should you not be as careful as the farmer? Should you not be more solicitous about the seed you sow in your hearts? Were the husbandman less judicious, were he to sow bad seed, his loss would be only temporary. In another year he could retrieve the loss sustained by his carelessness; but you cannot so easily annul the bad effects of a pernicious habit, nor can you banish the habit at will. It is less difficult to prevent it, than when it is formed, to eradicate it. And just as surely as you foster the habit, just so surely you will reap the ruin which others have harvested from

the same habit. When a farmer plants corn, corn will grow. When he sows wheat, wheat comes forth from the field. But he would certainly be astonished were he to sow wheat, and corn spring forth instead of wheat. He would be astonished, I say, and rightly, too, for such a phenomenon would be contrary to nature. It is thus also with you. If you sow a destructive habit, you need expect nothing but devastation—devastation of hope, devastation of family happiness, devastation of peace, devastation of everything which promotes tranquillity or secures protection. I remember meeting a man who was about forty years of age. He was a Catholic, but had never made his first Communion. He had been only once or twice to confession, and that was when he was a boy nine years of age. He declared he was not a bad man, though there was scarcely a crime, except murder, he did not commit. From his boyhood he had led a gambler's life, and had participated in everything in which a gambler engages. I asked him why he did not tear himself loose from the habit and go to confession. His answer was: "I could not. Time and again I thought of confession, but feared I could not keep the resolution to refrain from gambling, and did not wish to heap sin upon sin. Even recollections of early boyhood often made me wretched. I would think of my mother and father, who died when I was a boy, and wondered whether they knew of the life I was leading. The thought would make me sad, and I would strive to banish it from my mind. Unfortunately mine has been a miserable career." He spoke of his struggles. How he often wished he had not thus wasted his life. How he desired to abandon his chums, but could not. Life was for him a failure. And now, let me ask the young men of this parish, do you want

to be victims of the same remorse? Do you want in your old age to have your hearts rent with the same lamentation? Do you desire, as you approach the grave, to look back sorrowfully on the past, and see nothing but sin, madness, and despair? You do not? Then break away from the grasp of this vicious, devastating habit. If you do not before it becomes your master, you will be haunted in old age with memories dismal, terrible, and appalling.

Even innocent games should not induce you to waste your time or make you slaves. I knew a man, a merchant tailor, who became so infatuated with croquet that he completely neglected his business and destroyed his trade. During one season he was never to be found in his store. As Franklin would say, he did not keep his shop, and his shop soon failed to keep him. I knew another man, a shoe dealer. Baseball was his infatuation. He had to see every game. Often three or four in a week. The consequence was that a sheriff took possession of his store. I give these examples just to show you how easy it is to become a slave. And if innocent games can produce such havoc, what must be the passion and the excitement when money is wagered—when the last dollar is staked!

Of course you know there is no sin in playing a game of cards for pastime at home or even elsewhere; still, I am not much in favor of it, because in this manner young people become acquainted with a dangerous game. It is only one step from pastime to betting. Then they may often see their parents bet, and thus gambling is introduced and taught to the young. A boy of ten years of age is an expert. He can tell you the name of every card in the deck, but ask him a few questions in Catechism and he is a dunce. He

may not even be able to say his prayers. Would it not be better to encourage him to read? Develop in him a taste for good books, and he is quite well protected. He will love to read, and his reading will bring him useful information. He will not then be found gambling, drinking, or quarreling. He will be a sober, sober-minded, intelligent, well-informed young man.

Beware, then, of gambling of every sort! Beware of cards, of dice, of horse-racing, of every game for money or for "drinks!" The end of all these is ruin. The hope of winning is a mirage alluring you on and on and on, until your health is destroyed by feverish excitement and loss; until your soul is devastated by drink and other crimes. You bet; but your stake is not only your purse; your stake is the health of your body; your stake is honesty, sobriety, honor, and peace—peace of your family—yea, your stake is your immortal soul! And if you continue a gambler to the end of life, your eternal peace is played and lost in the game. Your life on earth is miserable, your family wronged, others plundered, and yourself disgraced. The devils of gambling are drunkenness, lust, quarrelling, murder, and a prison! Are you prepared to enter upon a course which abounds in horrors and ends in damnation? Are you prepared to abandon the asylum of tranquillity; to depart from the gentle, peaceful moorings of your religion; to exile yourself from the ennobling pursuits of a Christian life? God forbid! God forbid that you would be so insane, so mad as to barter peace for wretchedness! There is more joy in one Hail Mary than in all the success which ever attended gambling. Be sober, therefore, and watch. Have a constant vigilance over yourself. Have definite maxims of conduct, based upon your religion, and never

depart from them. Be sober-minded in all your undertakings. Ask God to keep you sober—sober in body, sober in mind, sober in the practice of your religion, sober in your service to your God. Then a prison cell will not afford you a dying couch ; demons will not be the companions of your dying moments, and the terrors of hell will not overwhelm your departing spirit ! But the angel of peace, the sacraments of the Church, and the benediction of heaven will be a passport to the eternal realms of joy !

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

But I say to you, that whosoever is angry with his brother, shall be in danger of the judgment. (Math. v.—22.)

On Anger.

My Dear Brethren: You should discriminate between lawful anger and that which is unlawful. It is sometimes good to be angry. The passion of anger is implanted in man's nature for a good purpose. Like all the other passions, it can be abused and consequently become sinful. Anger ofttimes makes us brave against sin and crime. You may justly be exasperated at the scandal given by some Catholics who do not obey the voice of the Church. You may be provoked to anger by the insulting invectives so often heaped upon your religion by those who are ignorant of the sacred subject they so flippantly malign. In all these cases you correspond to the injunction of the Psalmist: "*Be ye angry and sin not.*" (Ps. iv.—5.) Your Divine Lord was also angry when He drove the buyers and sellers out of the temple; but who would accuse Him of sin? St. Paul, moreover, was angry at Elymas, and St. Peter at Sapphira.

A parent is righteously incensed at his son who will not go to Mass on Sunday. The parent's indignation is aroused by the irreligious conduct of his son. He upbraids him for the sinful course he is pursuing, admonishes him to go to confession, scolds him

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for his un-Christian behavior ; and in all this he is doing the duty of a faithful father. The wife is irritated because her husband has betaken himself to intemperate drinking. He is neglecting his business, ruining his reputation, refraining from church, setting a deplorable example to his young family. She is angry on this account with him. She scolds, threatens, chides, all for the worthy purpose of weaning him from his pernicious habits. She does her part and sins not thereby. If " she nurses her wrath to keep it warm " (Burns), she is quite uncensurable. The daughter promenades the streets to a late hour in the night. She is enamored with disreputable company, dotes upon obnoxious books, and does about what she pleases. The mother advises, but her counsel is scorned. The mother is behind the age. She is old and querulous. Yes, time and provocation have made her so ; but she is still a mother ; and, if she become angry at her unreasonable and wayward daughter, she does what any mother may do under such irritation. A good sound scolding often produces excellent fruit.

Now, you must not conclude that all anger is innocent. Anger, if unrestrained, is terrible and destructive in its effects. Rash, inconsiderate anger, all should avoid ; for it is usually not to correct in a Christian manner, but to revenge with foul purpose. "*Anger*," says Job (v.—2), *killeth the foolish and envy slayeth the little one.*" The universal history of this passion, unmitigated by reason and religion, is a record written by the gory hand of destruction. Nations as well as individuals have been prostrated by the usurping tyranny of this passion. It has been the fermenter of wars which have cursed the earth, while it transmitted its avenging hatred to succeeding generations. How often it has

blighted the happy prospects of many a family. Brother has killed brother. The wife, the husband; and the husband, the wife. Nations have been pillaged and families destroyed by this infuriated monster. It dethrones reason, terrifies the noble aspirations, and annihilates affection. Under its sway love smiles with the weapon of death, deliberation becomes madness, and a rational being becomes an enraged brute. "Is there anything more like madness," says Cicero, "than anger. The color, the voice, the glare of the eye, impotence of words and deeds,—what have they to do with sanity? Anger brought Ajax to madness and death."

You now understand why our Divine Saviour laid such stress upon the excesses of the passion of anger. He came to teach a new doctrine—one of peace to all men. "*By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you love one another.*" (St. John xiii.—35.) Since anger is the antagonist of peace and love, He wished to teach us its horrible repulsiveness and direful effects, so that it may be always controlled by reason, and that the angel of peace may always dwell among His people. He points out to us the degrees of anger. First it burns in the breast, then it finds vent in such offensive expressions as raca, and finally it bursts forth in a torrent of abuse which is designated by the expression, "Thou fool." By this last are meant all those vocal manifestations of anger, such as insults, revilings, and curses which break forth from a furious soul, and are in their nature grievous sins. To call a person a fool in a jocose way is not a mortal sin; and if not intended to give an offense at all, it partakes not of the malice of even the slighest venial sin.

"*Let not the sun go down upon your anger*" (Ephes. iv. —26), says the Inspired Writer. This solemn injunction

you should all observe. If from nature or habit you are prone to anger, if you are like powder which ignites at the first spark, be ever on your guard. Control yourselves. Shackle this passion as you would your most deadly enemy. Never allow your blood to be inflamed by the frenzy of a misdirected heart, any more than you would follow the advice of an inveterate foe. Do not catch fire at the first moment; and if perchance you do, extinguish the flame before it consumes you. It may destroy you before it does your antagonist. But should you subdue your adversary, the blow may cause you more affliction than it did him. The victim of your anger may perish at your hand; but in prison you would deplore your rashness, when your sorrow could not mitigate your crime in the eyes of the civil law. How much misery has not this passion inflicted upon the human race! How like madness it makes us! It has been the curse of many a home! The destroyer of friendship, the slayer of friends, the generator of endless feuds! Therefore, "*Let not the sun go down upon your anger.*"

You have unquestionably noted how Jesus, your Saviour, enjoins upon you the obligation of becoming reconciled with those with whom you have had any dissension. "*If, therefore, thou bringest thy gift to the altar,*" declares your Saviour, "*and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave thy gift before the altar and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.*" (Math. v.—23, 24.) Now, let me inquire, what purpose had your Divine Lord in issuing this command? Do you not think He had some reason for this? Does He not know the awful consequences to which anger leads? Most assuredly; and the fact that He has thus forbidden you to offer

your gift before reconciliation, must impress you with the importance of His demand. Do not flatter yourselves that you can harbor hatred for your brother and that still your gift will be pleasing to God. He tells you He does not want your offering; you cannot be in enmity with one of His creatures and yet expect to find in Him a condoner of your rancor. Moreover, this command is beneficial to you, for it insists on you curbing your resentment. It bids you weigh well the nature of anger, its terrible results, its offensiveness to Almighty God. You may imagine you are grievously wronged, that your adversary has given you cause for just anger, that he has violated the most sacred pledges, abused your confidence, and robbed you of your good name. If this is the case, there are means of redress; and the best is to leave the adjustment of the offence and the punishment thereof with the unerring Judge of heaven and earth. '*Revenge is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.*' (Rom. xii.—9.) By thus appealing to Infinite Justice you submit your case to an impartial judge. You will dissipate all feeling of rancor from your soul, and peace will come to your troubled brain. On the other hand, should you seek revenge by unlawful means, you are only depriving yourself of the weapons of defence. You are retaliating in a vicious manner, and lowering yourself to the level of your foe. It is better to bear some contumely, than to rob yourself of tranquillity of soul and body. Protect yourself from the attacks of your enemy as best you can, and rest satisfied in the accomplishment of this. People will soon learn the ignoble traits of your enemy's character, and he shall suffer manifold for his injustice. Besides, were you to permit your angry passions to prevail, they would soon become your master, and a more venemous

foe than any other you could have. Anger would torture you in soul and body. Peace and rest would be strangers to you. Your pillow would be restless and your couch thorny. Nervousness, fretfulness, ill-health would be a few in the train of consequent evils. You would simply devour yourself, and be more destructive to yourself than all your enemies could be. Moreover, what could you gain in the end ? Your advantage, if any, could not compensate you for the loss of Christian patience ; could not restore the unanimity of your moral and intellectual powers ; could not replace you upon that plane of universal respect whence your angry passions dragged you down. It is needless to comment further upon the salutary words of the Gospel. You fully understand that what God speaks to you is worthy of your earnest consideration ; His words are the words of wisdom ; His knowledge, the knowledge of the universe. He knows what you should do, and what you should avoid, to be happy.

In this meditation you may wonder why such a passion was implanted in the human breast. For good, let me answer ; for good and nothing else. What a benefit it is to man. What energy it imparts ! What nobleness of purpose ; what abhorrence for the base, sordid, cruel and despotic ! "But I have too much of it," some one replies ; "I am ill-tempered, and like the lightning flash which destroys." Yes ; but the lightning, when once controlled, becomes a most useful servant, annihilating in its fury, but obedient in its subjection. Train the passion of anger, subject it to the reason; and from an injurious force when furious, it is converted into a servant both brilliant and advantageous. It is this that gives vividness to the orator's tongue, brilliancy to his thoughts, and fervor to his emotions. Indignation

bursts forth at the sight of wrong or the cry of oppression. The nobleness of great deeds is extolled, the vile denounced, virtue crowned, vice disrobed of her affectation and paraded in her repulsive garb of dissipation, and all this by the energetic power of well-trained anger. Deprive the orator of this auxilliary, and you leave him weak indeed. Banish it from the painter's or the sculptor's soul, and you paralyze his arm. Despoil the human heart of this potent and efficient passion, and you cripple the power and enslave the energies of the human race.

It is unnecessary to call your attention to the various other useful manifestations of anger in the daily life of everyone ; nor is more argument needed to convince you that the passion of anger is not in itself a curse, but a blessing. Like all other gifts, it can be abused ; then it becomes horrible and destructive. Control, therefore, your anger. Make it submissive to the reason. Harness it for the work for which it was given. Teach it that you are the master. You can surely do this ; for you are not more irritable than Socrates, more violent than Sampson, more cruel than August Cæsar,—and these learned to control themselves.

The most essential aid which you can employ in mastering your passions is the grace of God. Ask Him to assist you. When this tumultous passion strives to break forth as a furious lion from his cage, stop and say a prayer, invoking the assistance of the Blessed Virgin and her Divine Son. Often entreat Almighty God to direct you in the virtuous application of all your powers of body and mind. You will then be a useful and profitable servant in His vineyard ; and when you approach the altar to offer your gifts, you will not be necessitated to return and become reconciled with any one ; for you will be at peace with all—yourself, your neighbor, and your God.

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

For the days shall come upon thee : and thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee around, and straiten thee on every side, and beat thee flat to the ground. (St. Luke xix.—43, 44.)

MAN A TEMPLE OF THE HOLY GHOST.

My Dear Brethren : This passage of the Sacred Scriptures, which I have just read for you, contains the prediction of our Divine Lord respecting the destruction of Jerusalem. That ancient city was to be destroyed, and Jesus, the Saviour of mankind, weeps over its fall. The magnificent temple, the pride and glory of the Jewish people, was to be demolished ; and Jesus grieves at the contemplation of its loss and the perversity of His once chosen people. This famous abode of worship was erected to do honor and commemorate the living God. Countless numbers knelt and worshipped there. At its portals the beggar sat and craved for alms, indicating that charity was not dead among the Jewish people. The devout came from afar to offer there the incense of their souls in acknowledgment of God's providence and mercy. But now the days of true piety and devotion are passed, and the city and temple are doomed.

About the year 70 of the Christian era, Vespasian, being declared emperor of the Roman world, left the conduct of the army and the siege of Jerusalem to his son Titus. The siege was carried on vigorously and

without intermission until the walls were battered down; and Jerusalem, so sacred to the Jews, was reduced to a mass of ruins. The temple became the prey of the devouring flames, and a vast multitude of the people perished. In the year 361 A. D., Julian undertook to disprove the prophesy of the Messiah, and invited the Jews to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple. But God put a stop to their work. When all was ready for the new foundation, earthquake and fire came forth, terrifying the Jews and tearing the last stone of the old foundation from its resting-place for ages. In this manner was the prophesy of Jesus verified: "*And they shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone.*"

It is not, however, to the destruction of Jerusalem and its ghastly consequences, I wish especially to invite your attention; but desire to enlist your thoughts for the purpose of considering the destruction of a grander temple—man, the temple of the Holy Ghost. The gorgeous Jewish temple, all the sublime cathedrals of the world, all the edifices erected by man's skill and decorated by his genius, are but trifles when compared to man. Those vast structures, with their graceful, massive arches, with their lofty spires sublimely tipped by the cross and mingling with the clouds, are the reflections of man's genius and the product of his labor; but man is a creation of God's genius and a symbol of His love. He is the architect of the human temple, and what was the design? God Himself! "*Let us make man to our image and likeness,*" are His words; and this creation, man, is only a little lower than the angels. Still, it must be admitted that this human temple, the abode of the Holy Spirit, is often beaten flat to the ground. Sin is the enemy, and sin

often demolishes this wonderful product of God's power.

Unsullied, virtuous man is a temple the most sacred and most admirable. He is a living temple of the Holy Spirit, as St. Paul declares thus: "*Know you not that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you.*" (1 Ep. Cor. iii.—16.) The magnificent works of man's architectural genius have been admired, praised, and rewarded; but what are they in comparison with this great piece of work—man? The material part of man is beyond comprehension; but this material part, animated by the soul, and together with the soul, may well be the marvel of angels. Almighty God has created him to His image and likeness, and made him a temple in which Himself can reside. Man in his greatness, in his charity, in his defence of justice, in his protection of the weak, in all his great Christian virtue, reminds us of Shakespeare's memorable tribute to man. The bard of Avon says: "What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason; how infinite in faculties; in form and movement, how expressive and admirable! In action, how like an angel; in apprehension, how like a god!" But in his treachery, in his tyranny, in his dishonesty—in a word, in his sin, he recalls to our mind the famous lines of Lord Byron:

"O man! thou feeble tenant of an hour!
Debased by slavery or corrupt by power;
Who knows thee well, must quit thee with disgust,
Degraded mass of animated dust!
Thy love is lust, thy friendship all a cheat,
Thy smile hypocrisy, thy words deceit!"

Yes, man adorned by ennobling virtues is a temple of the Holy Ghost; but in his sin and debasement he is a temple of the infernal spirits.

Now, we may inquire, what precaution must we take

in order that we may always remain temples of God ? We might learn much in this respect from the endurance and destruction of the Jewish temple at Jerusalem. This temple had endured for centuries, but you remember that, before the Romans laid seige to Jerusalem, the Jews were split into factions ; their contentions consumed their strength and stability, and they reached the summit of their transgressions when they crucified the Saviour of the human race. They thus abused heaven and rendered themselves assailable as well as easily conquered. No wonder Jesus wept over that ill-fated city. In a similar manner, before man's degradation, he invites the enemy by the disorders prevailing in his own soul and body. He disarms the garrison which kept guard upon his virtues ; he unshackled his passions ; tumult and riot expelled God's graces, and he becomes a victim of his own madness and the slave of his external foe. He has suffered from internal and external attacks. The enemy encompasses him, attacks him from all sides, and beats him flat to the ground. He becomes a victim, a slave ! This marvellous temple of God, the abode of the human soul, created by the Omniscient Architect, redeemed by the Cross, destined for endless happiness, is subjugated, is made a slave ! Who can estimate the loss ? What tongue can enumerate the graces abused, the gifts of intellect and heart squandered ? A body ruined, a soul impoverished !

" What constitutes man's external enemy ? " you ask. It is needless to say that man's most destructive external foe is bad company. Staying out late at night, profanity, obscenity, strong potations,—these effect the downfall of the noblest souls. How insinuating and seductive these begin ! Gradually they gain power and

make advancement, until the citadel of the strongest will is captured. It may be in the beginning only a drink or two, a clever conversation, a jocose gathering; still they lead to ruin, if the company is vicious. Many a one, on account of his labor, mingles in such company. They will say: "Come and have a drink." The reply is: "I never drink." "Ah! have a drink; be one of us." Overcome by their importunities, and desiring to be sociable, he drinks. "Have another." He remonstrates. "Yes, have another. It is not often you are with us. We like a fellow of your stripe. A few glasses will not hurt you. I can drink a gallon and not feel any bad effects. It is only when a man makes a hog out of himself that his head becomes swollen and his stomach contorted." He drinks again. "Now, let us have a game of cards. It will while away the evening." But the other argues: "It is eleven o'clock; I must start for home. This will never do for me. I have business to attend to in the morning." "Never mind the business; a busy person always finds more to do than he is able to manage. There is nothing gained by this everlasting push and rush. Why, often we don't go home until two in the morning. We are hale and hearty and defy trouble. Be like us. Take the world easy. You will get along just as well, or better. Come, let us have a game." Reluctantly he consents. There is a hypnotism about them he cannot resist. He would like to leave them; and still he finds them a jolly, good crowd. They want to play for money. He objects. "But a game has no attractions unless there is something at stake." He submits. They play and drink. Between two and three in the morning he returns home. He is not yet a drunkard or a gambler; but the outworks are battered down. The foe has made a

notable advance. A few more such assaults, and the enemy will have triumphed. How many a young man, and old man, too, is thus conquered ; the faculties of his soul plundered ; the home of the loftiest thoughts demolished ; character, reputation, talent, and genius pillaged ! The temple of the Holy Ghost becomes the shrine of lewdness, gluttony, and despair ! He is, indeed, straitened on all sides and beaten by the foe—bad company. In his strength of will and manhood he confided. He laid aside the armor of religion, that shield which would have protected him from enemies within and without. Well may our Lord weep over the heaven-designed temple as He once wept over Jerusalem !

No wonder that Protestants look with suspicion upon us. They conclude, or wish to conclude, that all Catholics are like a few. They note the conduct of a few, and consequently hesitate to bestow upon Catholics places of trust or profit. You reply that this is an unfair criterion ; and that, if applied to Protestants, few of them would be holding any office of distinction, trust, or emolument. Your answer may bear with it the weight of truth ; still you must not forget the prejudice cherished against us and the odium which a few of us exhale. Protestants are often sceptical with us, and sometimes act with unfairness toward us. Yet, to what consideration do these thoughts lead us ? Do not the conditions which surround us urge us to be honorable in every affair ; to make superhuman efforts to banish by the righteousness of our lives every vestige of suspicion and prejudice from the minds of our Protestant friends ? Moreover, does not Christ teach us to lead holy lives, that by our sanctity we may edify others, save our own souls, and give glory to God ? But it can-

not be denied that some Catholics fail in these important duties, bringing thereby disgrace upon themselves, odium upon their church, and producing a diminution of the reverence and love due to our Eternal Father.

Now, what should every Catholic do that he may always remain a temple of the Holy Spirit? What should he do that he may secure his own salvation and instruct non-Catholics by his example? To these questions I answer: he should fortify his soul with good works, patience, industry, perseverance, and kindness. Upon the battlements of his soul he should place his guardian angel with a flaming sword, to repel all foreign foes; and with the assistance of the sacraments he should suppress all riotous disorders from within. His soul being thus garrisoned by heaven, he is a pure temple in which God loves to dwell; and a temple grander, more precious and enduring than the temple of Jerusalem. Peace reigns there, for he does not by his own distempers reduce his power nor invite the enemy.

But to return once more to the Gospel of the day; let me call your attention to another phase of our instruction. You have observed that when Jesus went to the temple, He found rascals bartering within its sacred precincts. He expelled them; but what were His words? You have just heard them. Thus He speaks: "*This is a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves.*" My dear brethren, could not our Divine Saviour often reproach us in a similar manner. Could He not say to many a Catholic: "I have created you a temple of the Holy Spirit; I have embellished your soul with the choicest gifts; I have designed you a temple of prayer, whence the soul should raise its loftiest aspirations to heaven; but you have made it a den

of thieves. You have banished these gifts—these ornaments of the soul. You have perverted the magnificent faculties of your mind, given you for the honorable purposes of life, and by the proper use of which you could attain to endless happiness. You have impoverished your soul, you have scorned my laws, you have spurned my goodness—your soul is a den of evil spirits." Is not such a rebuke often deserved by some so-called Catholics? And would it not be well for these if our Divine Lord would enter once more into their souls as He did into the temple of Jerusalem, and drive out those malicious spirits who have polluted the temple of the Holy Ghost—the human body and soul? Would it not be most beneficial for such persons were He to enter their souls by means of the Sacrament of Penance, thereby replenishing their souls with His grace and expelling the corruption of a wicked life? He will not go unless he be asked. But is it not most commendable in every Catholic, good and bad, to request his Divine Redeemer to come to him and take up His abode with him? It is in this manner that wayward Catholics will become good Christians, and good Christians better Catholics. By compliance with the doctrines of our Church, our souls will ever be resplendent with God's graces, our conduct unimpeachable, our fidelity to God unfaltering, and ourselves temples of the Holy Ghost.

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

And taking him aside from the multitude, He put His fingers into his ears ; and spitting, He touched his tongue. (St Mark vii.—33.)

Catholic Education.

My Dear Brethren : To-day the Sacred Scriptures recall to your minds this miracle of your Redeemer. You are told again how Jesus put His sacred fingers into the ears of the deaf-mute, and touched his tongue. Continuing, the Bible tells you how by His inherent power He commanded those diseased members to assume the functions for which they were created, and they obeyed His mandate. A spell of wonder seized the multitude. They were astonished at the apparent simplicity of the cure and its unquestionable effectiveness. When they realized what had taken place, when they heard the dumb speak and perceived that he could hear, they broke forth in acclamations of praise and thanksgiving. It was an extraordinary feat of power, and a convincing proof to the multitude that Jesus was more than human.

This miracle, moreover, suggests to our minds that there is a spiritual deafness and a spiritual dumbness as well as a physical deafness and a physical dumbness. Jesus healed the impediments from which the deaf-mute mentioned in to-day's Gospel suffered ; and He

died upon the cross in order to cure the spiritual deafness and dumbness of the soul. In the former case He succeeds perfectly ; in the latter, man's perverse will often intervenes and prevents the efficacy of the merits of Christ's suffering and death. To dissipate the clouds of ignorance and sin which obscured the true vision of the soul, and to direct that soul to its highest and noblest destiny, Jesus lived on earth, taught, and died. Being a divine person, He understood the difficulty of the task and the tenacity of the evil He desired to banish. He knew His temporal life was too short to accomplish this, and that time would obliterate from the minds of men the memory of His death, unless He took the necessary means to perpetuate a knowledge of His person and the beneficence of His doctrine. To dispel, therefore, the fog of ignorance and sin, and to impart spiritual light to the soul, He established His Church, which continues to teach and execute His doctrines. Among the many means which the Catholic Church has taken to illumine and direct the minds of men, is Christian education. By her system of training she heals, as far as she can, the spiritual and intellectual deafness and dumbness of the soul. In every age since she sat at the feet of Jesus in Jerusalem, she has diligently and constantly labored to promote and diffuse among all nations Catholic education. She erected her schools and encouraged the acquisition of knowledge. She patiently taught the barbarian invader, whose purpose it was to destroy her. After generations of persistent teaching she made him a docile member of society. It was she who taught Europe and developed true civilization. To-day in our country, through the generosity of her children, she expends millions of dollars in the educa-

tion of her people, while the members of her Church are compelled to contribute to the support of schools which are foreign to her purpose. These have agreed to a common platform of educational training in which God is ignored; but she desires to educate the child according to the best and only principles which are in conformity with the nature of the child and the safety of the Republic. In her schools the child is trained physically, intellectually, morally, and religiously. Any education which is deficient in any of these branches of culture is defective. Any true educator will admit this. Mr. Wickersham, who was some years ago superintendent of the public schools of this state, in one of his works on education, declares this same truth, and maintains that a child should be educated physically, intellectually, morally, and religiously. In the Catholic system God is first, secular knowledge afterwards. She points to God as the first and greatest ambition of the soul; and inculcates principles treating of man's relations to God, himself, and his neighbor. Any education which neglects to impress upon the mind of the child its responsibility to society and to God, is not only a failure, but is destructive to the perpetuity of the nation. To see the pernicious effects of public school training is not difficult. These effects are discernible in the dishonesty of bank officials, in politics, in the administration of justice, in almost every field of enterprise. In no age has the tyrannical principle that might is right, been so generally adopted as at the beginning of this century. Individuals and nations are intoxicated with this despotic maxim. This is largely due to the educational training imparted in these schools. In the public schools responsibility to God is neglected, while in the

higher institutions of learning there is a strong tendency to agnosticism and infidelity. It is not long ago since a president of one of our leading institutions of knowledge wrote a book entitled "Warfare Between Science and Religion"; and religion got the worst of it. What can be the influence of such a man of prominence upon the students of a university? Do you not agree with me that the students would ere long be tainted by the same proclivities? In our day God is forgotten and the results are visible. If you want an honest people you must have a people who fear and love Him to Whom all owe obedience.

But some will remark: "Oh, that is all very well from a Catholic point of view. The Catholic Church is not the educator you pretend. She sets a premium on ignorance. It is her purpose to parade her love for the sciences and the arts, while she keeps her people in the meshes of intellectual darkness. She boasts of her enthusiasm in education, but she shackles her adherents with the fetters of stupidity. She thrives best in ignorance, and ignorance maintains her strength. Look at the Philippine Islands. See Luzon, the most advanced of any of the islands of that archipelago; it is ignorant and barbarous. Behold also Cuba and Porto Rico! These are examples of the energy which the Catholic Church exerts in education. Ignorance, complete ignorance prevails! We will civilize them. We will build up our public school system in those enslaved islands, and give to these peoples the glorious light of knowledge!"

Now, my Christian friends, I do not wish to use one harsh, unkind, or disrespectful word toward those who speak thus; still, allow me to say, with all deference for the opinions of others, that they are meagerly

informed. They have not investigated the subject as closely as they should. They have heard some one proclaim such nonsensical falsehoods ; and concluded, without any investigation, that these falsehoods are as true as mathematical axioms. When prejudice and bigotry preach, it is prudent for the listeners to be skeptical. Those persons who are so loud in their condemnation of Catholic influence, do not appear to know that Luzon is remarkable for her advancement in the sciences ; that in Manila there were universities, hospitals, homes for the aged and weak, before Union Square in New York was laid out. Previous to the breaking out of the Spanish-American War, there were as many children attending the schools of Luzon, in proportion to the population, as in this State of Pennsylvania. And we think ourselves very far advanced in educational progress. In fact, before the war there was a compulsory law requiring the children to attend school. General Reeve tells us : " The enrollment of students in the San Thomas and Dominican universities, and the attention paid to such branches of knowledge as law, medicine, liberal arts, and civil engineering, excited and surprised me. Five thousand students were enrolled at the Dominican university." In Cuba, the first university was established more than fifty years before the Revolutionary war in this country. In Porto Rico even, where the children were few or scattered, means were taken to educate them. And if the Catholic Church did not accomplish all which some of her critics may demand, neither have the public schools in our country done all that might be expected. There is this difference --this vast difference acknowledged by every impartial observer—that the training given by the Catholic Church has made the peoples of those islands honest, and that is more than can be said in praise of our public schools.

But we will civilize them. Yes, we shall; yes, by teaching them the art of stealing, as we did recently in Cuba, when a postal official seized upon four hundred thousand dollars of the post-office receipts. We shall teach them to lie with facility, as we did when we promised Porto Rico the same flag and the same constitution as the United States enjoys. We shall teach them skill in acquiring money, as we are now doing in Manila, by introducing on Sunday horse-racing, pugilism, and gambling and drunkenness. Before we began to enlighten them with our civilization there were only a few saloons in Manila; now it is swarmed with them. Our chief ingredient of civilization imported to them is intoxicating beverages. We are great civilizers! In plunder and divorce and dishonesty and drunkenness, we are adepts!

Some of my friends may, however, reply: "While we admit your contentions, we consider you severe; and, moreover, we hold that you are only describing a part of our influence. You say not one word about that stupendous revival of spiritual energy inaugurated and encouraged and fed by the Protestant Church. We have co-operated with Jesus in expelling the deafness and dumbness of the soul. We have unfettered the human mind and have given light, freedom, and the Bible to downtrodden man. When your Church was afraid of the light, when she hid the Bible from the people, we diffused the illumining rays of Christianity and gave to the world, in the Bible, the sacred thoughts of Almighty God. Behold, we have placed the Bible in every land! We have placed it in the churches, in the schools, in the hotels, in passenger trains,—everywhere, in order that man may be enlightened and sanctified by the word of God! Is this not civilizing? Is this

not the grandest scope of education ? Are we not the true educators of the nations ? Yea, we shall send and are sending to the benighted peoples of those islands the word of God—the Holy Bible."

To all this my reply is that I question not the sincerity of your intention ; but fail to see the improvement which might be expected from your efforts. You despatch the Bible to the inhabitants of those islands. Your generosity and charity might be more appreciated by those who know you better. The Filipinos cannot well understand why you offer the Bible with one hand, and the contents of a Maxim gun with the other. They consider, poor, stupid people that they are, that the Bible teaches peace and good-will among men ; still you are burning their homes and slaughtering themselves simply because they love independence. The fatal mistake which you have always made is inconsistency. You proclaim the Bible to be the Revealed Word of God ; yet in your educational plan and in your civilizing efforts, it is not your guide. There is in your exertions considerable jealously and dislike, bordering ofttimes upon hatred. You propose to civilize these, many of whom are more civilized than yourselves. In your pious intention you purpose to liberate those islanders from the thraldom of the Catholic Church ; but at the very same time you know very little of the Catholic Church and what she has done for these nations. If you are so zealous for the salvation of souls and so enthusiastic in the distribution of the Bible, why not begin at home. In every city and town there is work for you ; and, if you are determined to maintain your ground, I would advise you to look to your conquests, for you are rapidly losing your prestige. That you have accomplished some

good, I shall not take upon myself to deny ; that you are willing to do more, I shall readily grant ; but that you are retreating in disorder from your former positions, I think you cannot successfully controvert. That you have disseminated the Bible, is quite true ; still, what is the result ? You began by maintaining that " the Bible is the whole and entire rule of faith " ; and you have arrived at a crisis in which many of you and many of your famed leaders attack the inspiration and truthfulness of this sacred volume. In hotels it was abused, on board trains it was ridiculed, in the public schools it was tossed from desk to desk ; and all this disrespect culminated in loss of faith. In Germany, higher criticism sent forth its earliest shoots ; but much of its fruit is harvested in this country, to the detriment and degeneracy of Protestantism.

As to the hiding of the Bible, let me refer you to Maitland's Essays on the Dark Ages. Although he was a Protestant, he had the candor and the courage and the honesty to do justice to the Catholic Church. He, moreover, declares that many writers who antagonize the Catholic Church never saw the original text from which they pretend to quote. This scholarly gentleman possessed the patience to search for the gems of knowledge at the fountain-source of mediæval history ; and in an age of venemous prejudice he had the fortitude to tell the truth. Catholics and Protestants should read his learned works on the Reformation and the Dark Ages. To charge the Church with concealing the Bible is now a stale argument among learned, truthful Protestants. It is good enough to preach to the ignorant who live in hamlets and country places, and who still retain some respect for the sacred volume, together with much dread of the horrible Catholics.

But to the inquiring, sincere Protestant we would say : If you deplore the ignorance which you imagine has solidified Catholic intellect, why not dispel the darkness enveloping your own mental faculties by lighting the lamp of true, honest, patient investigation ? Are you afraid you will become more liberal ? Remember, liberal mindedness, in truth, is a reflection of a great soul. Do you hesitate lest you may be subdued by Catholic achievement in education ? Hesitancy in research, and fear of doing justice, produce an intellectual vapor which blinds and makes cowards. Are you reluctant to investigate lest you may come under the spell of Catholic influence ; and, like many another, return to the old Church ? Be mindful that investigation and courage are among the boastful claims of the Protestant Church.

Permit me now to direct your attention to one of the disputes which I had with professors while attending the State Normal School of Edinboro, Pa. It will elucidate the subject which we are considering, because it will show how others see us. The author we were studying for that class was Wickersham, on education; and Prof. L. was our teacher. He was at times bitter and abusive ; but had from nature a kind, sympathetic heart. He said one day, that it was driving a team of stupid oxen when he was a boy, which made him so irascible ; but while this might have been a partial cause, I think his prejudice was due to his early environments. His heart was poisoned in boyhood by the religious atmosphere in which he lived ; but at times the current would flow from sources uncontaminated, and it was then his great, kind soul stood forth in its true attitude. Let me intimate here that it is not my purpose to review the whole discussion, but to

call your attention to two points. Wickersham, speaking of the downfall of ancient Greece and Rome, says that the monks no longer teach the world, and that a teacher in the public schools should inculcate patriotism in the minds of the young, so that, if our country were threatened by internal revolution or from an external foe, there would be patriots in sufficient number to maintain the dignity and unity of the nation unimpaired. Prof. L. not being a good historian, as our dispute demonstrated, imagined that the cause of the decay of those two ancient states was attributable to the monks. In a few words I showed him he was at sea; that the prestige of Greece was disappearing four centuries before Christ, and that Roman prowess began to vanish long before the dawn of the Christian era; hence the monks had nothing to do with stimulating the feuds of ancient Greece and Rome. He was embarrassed, and knew not whether to deny my proof or maintain his ignorance of the subject. But he finally added: "Students, you have not got to the backbone of the monks; the principle of the monks was to keep their pupils in ignorance, and the ignorance of the pupils was bliss to the monks." To this charge I replied: "You are not aware, Professor, that Albertus Magnus and St. Thomas Aquinas were both monks. Albertus was so celebrated for his erudition, that many marveled at the vast comprehension of his mind. In philosophy, theology, science, mathematics and every other known branch of knowledge in his time, he was master. Appleton's cyclopedia acknowledges this and, moreover, says that St. Thomas became as renowned for learning as his famous master, Albertus; and even excelled his illustrious teacher. Now, if it was the principle of the monks to keep their pupils in ignor-

ance, how did St. Thomas equal or excel his great master?" The professor was silenced. Since he knew little or nothing of these two illustrious schoolmen, he was afraid to contradict me lest he may be only entangling himself in the net of his own ignorance. This is only a brief outline of our contention. It was conducted with much warmth, especially on my part. I may say it was on my part excitement born of fear and indignation. I feared lest he would be too much for me, and that I could not cast back with force the insult he hurled at the Church. Strange as it may appear, he was more my friend after the contest than he ever was before. On one occasion, when a student was criticizing the Catholic opposition to the Bible in the public schools, he said: "We do not fully understand the Catholic position. The more I see of them, the better I like them." So I argue, that Protestants should investigate without bias Catholic education and Catholic doctrine. They may discover that it is the fog of prejudice which has settled upon their own intellects, which prevents them from seeing and consequently from acknowledging the merits of Catholic education. Let them light the torch of honest investigation. Then they will penetrate through the darkness of their own environments, and the light of truth will shine upon them.

Having examined and compared the two systems of education and their effects upon society, they must admit that an education without God is dangerous to the public welfare. Edmund Burke declared that belief in God is necessary to the preservation of the state. As a statesman, he saw as deep and as far into the wants of society as any other man of his age, or probably of any age. But when is man or woman to be impressed

with accountability to God, if not in childhood and youth ; and when is there a more opportune time than in the early period of life while attending school ? A school in which there is no prayer, a school in which there is no knowledge of God imparted, may sharpen the mental faculties ; still the keenness elevates to no noble conception of the state, nor to any exalted ideal of a citizen ; but to self-aggrandizement, plunder, conspiracy, and ruin.

Note now the influence of Catholic education upon the child, and hence its moulding power upon the man. When a Catholic child enters the class-room, it beholds the crucifix. The young mind is attracted by this emblem of God's mercy, and inquires what it means. He is told that it is a representation of the death of Christ. He inquires who Christ is, and is told that He is the Saviour of the world ; that He died on the cross, that children may be good and love Him; that if they be good and always love Him, they will live forever with Him in heaven ; but if they are bad, they will be punished in hell. In this manner the child is trained from day to day. As his young soul develops, he gathers more information concerning God and his own duties. In the morning, studies begin with prayer, and at noon they close with prayer. In the afternoon the same edifying, moulding, Christianizing influence is directing and forming the child. A part of the day is devoted to catechism, which treats especially of God, of himself and his fellow man. Everything suggests to his young mind something about his Creator and his own destiny. Tell me not that such a child will not make a more honest man, a more patriotic citizen, a more devout Christian, than the child that hears nothing of God, that is never taught to pray, that draws no elevating

inspiration from religious objects! No; tell me not such falsehoods, for the voice of all nature cries out against such falsity! Environments either destroy or nurture the vegetable, the shrub, or the tree; and environments destroy or nurture the poet, the painter, the philosopher, or the theologian. Our surroundings have much to do with the formation of our bodies and the development of our souls; or they enfeeble, contaminate, and ruin. What arguments, then, can be too weighty and persuasive to convince parents and the benefactors of education, that true education consists in making the child a man—a man in honesty, in sobriety—a man in patriotism, in fidelity to God. If the ancient Athenians were subjected in youth to trials of great endurance, that they might be great warriors; if in every age and land the soldier is trained to meet with courage the shock of battle; if in every pursuit a man best trained does best what his occupation demands, why then should not a child trained in the beautiful and sublime principles of Christianity be faithful to trust, be honest in his dealing, be incorruptible in the legislature, impartial on the bench, in all the affairs of life an irreproachable man? We will admit that every child which is trained in a Catholic school may not possess or acquire the distinguishing features of blameless reputation; but neither is every soldier a hero. Allowance must be made for the temptations of after-life. Still, when you consider what sort of a soldier an untrained man would make, you have some conception of the cowardice, dishonesty, and unreliability of a person who cares little whether there is a God or not.

In conclusion, permit me to add that, if the Catholic Church in this country is not accomplishing all that her

critics require, let them give her for five years the vast state resources contributed to the public schools ; and let the Protestant denominations support the public schools by private contributions, as the Catholics are now maintaining the parochial schools ; and we shall demonstrate to them the efficiency of Catholic education. We shall also see what they can do with their private charity for education. Give the Catholic Church all the funds now expended on the public school system in the United States, and she will prove the efficacy of her teaching power and her influence in healing the spiritual and mental deafness and dumbness of society.

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day? (St. Luke xiv.—3.)

The Healing Influence of the Sacrifice of the Mass.

My Dear Brethren: Our Divine Lord, on the occasion mentioned in the Gospel for this Sunday, asks the lawyers and Pharisees: "*Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day?*" They did not reply to His question; they were silent. But Jesus took the sick man who was before Him and healed him and sent him away. Our Saviour, by this miracle, teaches us that there is no day too sacred for the performance of charity or for the expression of sympathy. To soothe affliction and allay suffering are noble deeds on any day. Jesus pitied the man sick of the dropsy; and by His divine power banished disease and imparted joy. We should learn a lesson from this Gospel. We should, as far as we can, encourage the infirm, mitigate woe, and sympathize with affliction.

You understand that the Sabbath day of the Jews is not the Sabbath day of the Christian. They observed the seventh day of the week, we keep holy the first day. It is needless to recall to your minds, that the Church in the earliest days of Christianity made this transfer specially on account of two events of vast and sacred impor-

tance. These events were : the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead on Sunday, and the Descent on Sunday of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles. To commemorate these great blessings, and to acknowledge the beneficence of Almighty God, the Church sanctified Sunday, and commanded that forever more all Catholics must keep it holy. Yet, though the Sabbath day is Sunday now, God still heals on the Sabbath—on Sunday ; and especially does He do this during the Sacrifice of the Mass.

Since the first celebration of this August Sacrifice until the present day, how many a person has been healed by the divine efficacy of the Mass ! How many a saint has with heavenly rapture knelt at the Consecration of the Mass, and poured out the noblest emotions of his soul in thanksgiving ! How his soul went out to his Saviour, and with holiest fervor contemplated the beauty and the grandeur and the holiness of this great Sacrifice ! His soul was healed by his Saviour, his courage and fortitude were renewed, his sanctity increased, his faith strengthened, his hope confirmed, and his charity inflamed. And in regard to the sinner, what solace he received as he bowed his sin-stained soul before Jesus on His altar ! He pleaded for mercy ; his supplication was heard ; and who can tell of the peace that came at the cry of his prayer ? His Saviour has pity upon him, speaks to his heart, and heals him on the Sabbath day. Like the poor publican, the sinner, crushed in his weakness, kneels afar off and implores mercy. He who died for sinners, He who healed the breaking heart of Magdalen, speaks words of comfort to the sorrowing soul ; and the sinner departs from the house of God with a joyful, grateful heart. Yes, how many a saint and sinner have been healed on the

Sabbath day by the efficacy of the Divine Sacrifice of the Mass!

But there are some Catholics who do not desire to be healed. They would rather remain in their infirmities. They prefer disease to health. You are astonished at these remarks, and inquire: "Where is the Catholic who does not desire health? Where is the Catholic suffering from consumption, or fever, or cancer, or any chronic or acute disease, who does not wish for health?" My dear brethren, there are other maladies more loathsome and dangerous than consumption, or cancer, or fever. There are other maladies incomparably more ruinous. There are the moral and spiritual maladies; and they are interwoven with the physical. You cannot separate them from the physical except in their effects. Consumption destroys the body, but the soul soars above the ravages of this disease and is not contaminated by it! The soul outlives the blow of physical death, and rises above the dismal environments of the grave; but spiritual disease destroys the body and condemns the soul, this noble work of God, to endless perdition! Now, to be more plain, let me ask: is not drunkenness a disease? Is not malicious slander a disease? Is not excessive love for money a disease? Is not carnal, sinful lust a disease? And is there not many another disease of this kind? These spiritual maladies are often healed during the Sacrifice of the Mass, when Jesus again speaks with sinners. Yea, this Adorable Sacrifice prevents such disease; for where is the person who from childhood has attended Mass with regularity and devotion and is infested with these corroding disorders? He cannot be thus defiled. He speaks too often with Jesus during these solemn moments; and Jesus too often communicates

His purifying, stabilitating grace, to permit these virulent distempers to defile his soul. No ; such a person is protected by the shield of divine grace and his own piety.

It must be quite clear to you that spiritual maladies are more destructive than physical diseases ; still, let us take a few illustrations in order to convey better to your minds the truths which I am endeavoring to explain. A mother dies of consumption. Her family is left helpless. Her husband and children bemoan their great loss. Tears tell of their affliction. But still their mother was a devout Catholic. They speak of her with the greatest love. They pride themselves in having such a mother. They honor her memory, and all the neighbors speak of her in kindest terms. Suppose, however, another mother who slanders, vilifies, and defames everyone who provokes her malice. She gads from house to house with the latest scandalous news. Her motive is not innocent gossip, but malicious injury. Enmity prompts her tongue, and hatred is searching for revenge. Her children are running wild, her home is in disorder, and herself is in filth. She is known everywhere in the parish as a dangerous person. Now, is not her disease worse than consumption ? Who has a kind word for her ? To be sure, some who want news will treat her very socially ; but for me, I would give her as much welcome as I would the devil. No respectable person wants anything to do with her. Some dread her, and her own children are ashamed of her. Is not her malady more loathsome than consumption ? She is a pestilence in herself, she contaminates others, and stirs up the fires of hate. When she dies, who will lament her loss ? What tears will be shed at her funeral ? Many will rejoice that she is

gone ; and her children will never mention her name. Is not, therefore, consumption a mild disease, compared to slander ? The consumptive may leave a hallowed memory ; the memory of the other is hideous and detestable. Consumption does not yield to human remedies ; but the other can be cured, and the remedy is found by devoutly hearing Mass.

Here is another example. The father is a drunkard. He has squandered his substance until he is a beggar. In every saloon he is cuffed and kicked and often thrown out into the gutter. His clothes are in tatters, his face disfigured, and he is an abject, debased object of pity. He is diseased—body and soul are diseased ! He was created to the image of God ; but he has blighted the great powers of his soul and blasted all his noble prospects ! Drunkenness is a fell malady. It impoverishes the greatest talent and prostrates the noblest genius ! It is a devastating disease ! Had this man never been a drunkard, and had he died of fever, how different would be his life and how edifying his death ! A drunkard's grave would not contain his ashes, and his children and his friends would not bury his memory with his dust. Many may sympathize with him. His children may weep and pray for him, but they do not speak his name except in private. What are the ravages of fever to the debasement and destructiveness of inebriety ? They are not comparable. Yet this devouring malady may be healed by Jesus during the Sacrifice of the Mass. If the drunkard attend Mass regularly and devoutly, he cannot but rise. During this sacrifice of Christ's love, let the drunkard appeal for mercy, and Jesus, Who never abandoned a contrite heart, will lift him up and heal him. Resolutions will be formed, and Jesus will fortify these resolutions with His all-healing grace ;

and the drunkard will again walk the ways of honesty, sobriety, and true Catholic devotion !

Now we shall take an example of a young man. He is wasting away on a bed of sickness,—cancer is consuming him. This loathsome disease is sapping away his strength. He is an object of compassion ; still, how much happier is he when his disease is contrasted with the malady which consigns another young man to State's Prison. Theft is the disorder which makes him dangerous to his fellow man. His disease must be cured, if possible, by confinement and hard labor ; but what is the cure compared to the suffering of his friends. A prison cell is bad enough, yet he suffers little of the odium attached to such maladies. His friends are the victims of his disease. They are disgraced, ruined, and ostracized ! His aged father and mother pine away in grief ! His brothers and sisters dare not speak his name. He has shamed them into silence, and has given their enemies power to insult and injure them. How incomparably better off is the young man dying of cancer. His disease is repulsive ; still his brothers and sisters and parents pity him, and pray for him, and study to calm his anguish. The priest often calls to console him, and whispers words of cheer. He receives the sacraments often. Jesus lives in his soul. Although his malady is disgusting, he is still the temple of the Holy Ghost and the shrine of Jesus, his Saviour. He dies ; and angels bear his pure soul beyond its frail home of dust and pain. He is happy with his God, while the other young man is barred by a prison. Contrast these two cases, and tell me which of these diseases is the more deplorable ? The thief, nevertheless, has doomed himself and his friends to spend their days and nights in misery. Had he attended

Mass from his childhood, had he communed with his Saviour during these moments of richest grace, he would not now be occupying a prisoner's crib.

You will pardon me for introducing one more illustration. I would turn away in sorrow from any contemplation of this mournful example were it not necessary to mention it to you. The example to which I refer applies to a daughter—a daughter living amidst the haunts of lewdness, wasting her life in sin, banishing from her soul every vestige of grace, damning herself and ensnaring others! What physical malady is equal to this most deplorable of spiritual diseases? There is none. A physical illness, be it ever so painful, leaves the soul pure and noble. No physical disorder, unless the offspring of sin, can mar this wonderful work of God. But lewdness destroys soul and body; nor does its virus cease with the destruction of its victim; it extends to every friend who wished her well and who mourns her decay. She is ostracized from society; or, if she has any society at all, it is the society of fiends. Her truest friend, her mother or her father, is as much startled at the sound of her name as they would be at an apparition from hell. Brothers and sisters and parents and friends are disgraced, wronged, and humiliated. Is there any physical disease, I ask again, equal to this corrupting, debasing, fiendish malady? There is no comparison, you will admit. It is a pity—pity for the daughter who barters her soul and body, too, for lust—pity for the parents who suffer the pangs of disgrace—pity for the brothers and sisters who weep over her fall. Had she died of consumption, pining away under its devouring fever, all would sympathize with her, all would pray for her—even her enemy would drop a tear of grief and reconciliation upon her

grave. But now, who could attend her funeral? Her nearest and dearest friends wish her dead and forgotten.

You realize, my brethren, that there are other diseases besides those which directly attack the body. The man to whom the Gospel of to-day calls attention, was sick of the dropsy. Jesus healed him. He rejoiced at the return of health. It was a happy Sabbath day for him. Jesus cured him, and Jesus cures and will cure those spiritual deseases which no human physician can reach. He still heals on the Sabbath day, if we only have the proper dispositions. He heals during the peaceful, happy, contemplative moments of the Mass. Angels adore around the chalice and the tabernacle; and Jesus, as humble, as kind, as gentle, as pitying as He ever was in the arms of His Mother, speaks to our souls. Yea, He entreats us to speak to Him, not to be distant or afraid, but to seek for the blessings of heaven and earth. Once more He says to us: "*Ask and you shall receive.* Hitherto you have not asked. *Ask, that your joys may be full.*" Sweet joys He imparts during those precious moments; the joy of peace, of contentment, of rapture, of noble resolution, and the sweetest joy, the joy of His friendship! Do you think that any Catholic living under such influence can contract these awful spiritual diseases which we have been considering? I know not to what conclusion you have arrived; but for me, I am convinced that no child reared in the bosom of the Catholic Church, schooled by the divine lessons of the altar, sanctified by the fellowship of Jesus, can ever be infected with any defiling malady. Where such disorders exist, there are some defects in devotion, in regularity, and in love for this most beautiful and sublime and invigorating sacrifice! This sacrifice has drawn to Catholic churches saints and

sinners; this sacrifice has banished woe and instilled solace; this sacrifice has perpetuated innocence in the hearts of the young, has confirmed it in the souls of the tempted, stabilitated it in the feebleness of old age; this sacrifice is the centre of Catholic unity, the object of all devotion, the consolation of the Church, and the great divine magnet which has drawn millions into the Church of Christendom! Here Jesus again heals on the Sabbath day; heals the soul and the body, too, accordingly as it comports with our temporal and spiritual welfare. Let us this morning thank Him for all His mercies; let us be grateful to Him for His loving condescension towards us; let us ask Him to teach us to love Him more and more; but let us pray that we may not be taught by the malice of our enemies, or the harshness of adversity, but by His gentle, persuasive, health-giving blessings on the Sabbath day.

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